

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

3 9999 06548 447 7



# Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

Kevin H. White, Mayor  
City of Boston

GOVDOC  
HT168  
.B6B663  
1979x



...every inhabitant who is a householder shall have free fishing and fowling in any great ponds, bays, coves and rivers, so far as the sea ebbs and flows...

Ordinance of 1641 of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony based upon Charters granted by King Charles I to the Royal Governor.



# Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

**City of Boston**  
Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

**Boston Redevelopment Authority**  
Robert J. Ryan, *Director*

Board of Directors  
Robert L. Farrell, *Chairman*  
Joseph J. Walsh, *Vice-Chairman*  
James G. Colbert, *Treasurer*  
James K. Flaherty, *Assistant Treasurer*  
James E. Cofield, Jr., *Member*  
Kane Simonian, *Secretary*

*"For some time, I have looked forward to the day when Boston would once more be a city opening out to sea rather than turned inward on itself. Historically, Boston was a great seafaring port. Both economically and visually, the life of the city was oriented toward its beautiful, natural harbor—one of the finest on the eastern seaboard. Though much has happened in recent years to reestablish the link between the harbor and the city, much more is necessary to restore it for the enjoyment and benefit of Boston and its neighboring communities."*

*Kenneth W. White*





*Boston Harbor, 1854*  
(Courtesy of The  
Bostonian Society)

## 4 **Introduction**

### 8 **Summary and Recommendations**

- 8 Changing Function of Harborfront
- 8 Current Use of Harborfront
- 10 Outstanding Issues and Problems
- 10 Harbor Neighborhoods
- 12 Downtown/Fort Point Channel
- 16 Funding Strategy

### 18 **Harbor Neighborhoods**

- 20 Land Use
- 21 East Boston
- 22 Charlestown
- 23 Downtown/Fort Point Channel
- 26 South Boston
- 27 Dorchester
- 27 Public Transportation

### 28 **Downtown/Fort Point Channel**

- 30 Existing Conditions
- 33 Current Issues
- 34 The Plan

## 46 **Implementation**

- 48 Development Process
- 49 Management and Legislation
- 50 Current Legislative Proposals
- 51 Funding Strategies

# Introduction

*Sheltered Walkway—  
Long Wharf, circa 1880  
(Courtesy of The Society  
for the Preservation of  
New England  
Antiquities)*



4 Since its founding in 1630, Boston's fortune and its future have been linked with its harbor. The presence of a large and protected port was the primary reason for the settling of Boston, and led to the City's golden era as a major banking and financial center. Boston's decline as a port city started in the mid 1800's when changes in shipping needs, increased costs, and urban growth patterns rendered many of Boston's piers vacant and useless.

Although the functions of Boston's harbor have changed considerably over the past 350 years, the harbor, its 30 islands and central Boston serve as focal point for New England. Over three million people live within a 25 mile radius of the harbor. In the City of Boston, over 200,000 people live within walking distance of the water along the harbor, and the Mystic, Chelsea, Charles and Neponset Rivers.

The decline of the harbor started to reverse about 20 years ago when the City, through the Boston Redevelopment Authority, began an effort to revitalize the waterfront. More than \$100 million has been spent by the City to upgrade the commercial and recreational resources of the harbor.

In the downtown waterfront alone, a new residential community consisting of some 1600 units has been created. The commercial activity which is now part of the waterfront ranges from small shops to Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and millions of people have visited the

waterfront to enjoy regional attractions, such as the New England Aquarium and the Waterfront Park. Across the harbor, at the decommissioned Charlestown Navy Yard, work has begun on creating another new residential community, one that also has at its focal point a large waterfront park and a public walkway along the stretch of the waterfront that was once closed from public use.

The success of those efforts has brought more than just dramatic physical improvements to the waterfront. It has helped re-establish Boston's historic link with the sea.

But even with these significant accomplishments, there are still major problems concerning the waterfront to be solved. As the City and the BRA have pursued many harbor planning and development efforts, new issues have arisen which must be addressed now.

Perhaps the most important outgrowth of the City's past effort is the harbor's potential as a source of economic growth and recreation. Interest in the harbor has never been greater. Now, with more than 100 governmental agencies, associations and community groups in some way involved with the harbor, this new interest brings to the forefront conflicting priorities for the use of the harbor. Never has there been a greater need for coordination of development and planning for the harbor.

Therefore, the BRA, six months ago established a Harbor Planning Task Force within the agency, and retained



*T Wharf, circa 1890  
(Courtesy of the Society  
for the Preservation of  
New England  
Antiquities)*



*Landing of British  
Troops—Long Wharf,  
1768 (Courtesy of The  
Bostonian Society)*

Sasaki Associates as consultants, to undertake a comprehensive planning study of Boston's waterfront.

This Boston Harbor study is not a final report. Rather, it allows the BRA, as the city's planning agency, to articulate the challenges and opportunities concerning the revitalization of Boston Harbor and its 100 miles of shoreline. Issues surrounding the harbor are many and complex, ranging from development of a comprehensive plan and management program, to concerns for more adequate public access to and use of the harbor. Demand for development must be balanced against the need and desire to preserve waterfront areas for recreation of all kinds, including parks and open space.

The program outlined in this report is ambitious—and expensive. The City cannot by itself resolve all the issues any more than it can underwrite the expenses involved in the program. Ultimately, Boston Harbor is a regional resource, and as such, the future of the harbor and funding of public improvements must be shared by all levels of government, as well as the private sector.

But the City, through this study, can articulate a vision of what the Boston Harbor can become and a strategy for achieving that vision. It remains for many others to coordinate their actions with the City for more productive uses beneficial to the neighborhoods and City of Boston. For instance, the Massachusetts Port Authority, the largest owner of land along the harborfront, must

relinquish control of some vacant and underutilized parcels of land. Similarly, the Metropolitan District Commission must proceed expeditiously in finalizing implementing the proposed sewage treatment program for the harbor. This report focuses upon only a few of the major issues confronting the harbor.

First, it is directed towards gaining a more complete view of the present use of Boston's harborfront, as well as the problems and opportunities which exist in many of Boston's harborfront neighborhoods, such as East Boston, Charlestown, the North End and downtown, South Boston and Dorchester. This phase of the report is an inventory, a status report, of the uses along Boston's harborfront at the present time.

Second, the report includes a detailed planning and development program for a portion of the Boston harborfront from the Waterfront Park to the Fort Point Channel area.

Finally, the report reviews significant management and funding strategies, legislation, and programs which could have a major effect upon achieving improvements to the harbor and its shoreline.

The report should be viewed in its historic context. Twenty years ago a private, non-profit group proposed a plan for revitalization of the downtown Boston waterfront. The City of Boston responded to that challenge by



6 refining that plan and implementing its recommendations through an urban renewal project carried out by the City.

Like the earlier renewal plan, this study outlines a plan for action that will involve the public and private sectors and will determine the future of Boston's harborfront for the rest of this century.

Twenty years ago the challenge to private sector and to the City was to show that Boston's harbor could be brought back to life. The City had to take the lead in encouraging development and in providing development incentives and subsidies to encourage new commercial activity. The efforts brought Boston to a crossroads in the development of its waterfront land. Today, it must assume the role of coordinator, again taking the lead in helping to determine what can be done, what should be done and how it will be done.

Aside from obvious improvements which are taking place along the waterfront in the downtown as well as in Boston's harborside neighborhoods, and new efforts which are just beginning at the Charlestown Navy Yard and Columbia Point, numerous problems remain.

#### **Harbor Transportation**

Access to the Harbor Islands is limited and expanded water commuter service needs to be developed.

#### **Harbor Development/Conservation Policies**

Major policies must be formulated for Boston Harbor and its shoreline. Conflicts between uses need to be resolved.

#### **Harbor Pollution**

The MDC and EPA are reviewing alternative plans for reducing sewage flows into Boston Harbor and its tributaries, but to date little has been achieved in reducing levels of pollution in Boston Harbor.

#### **Public Access**

Significant areas of the waterfront have been made accessible to the public in recent years through either public acquisition and improvement or through the placement of strict controls over private development projects requiring public access to the water. Nevertheless, vast stretches of waterfront property are off limits to the public.

#### **Harbor Management**

It is estimated that there are over 100 public entities with varying types of jurisdictions over Boston Harbor. An overall management program capable of coordinating these diverse interests together with a comprehensive plan, program and strategy for Boston Harbor and its shoreline is needed.



Deteriorated Piers (CZM)



#### Future of Massport's Harborfront Holdings

The largest single owner of harborfront property is Massport. Much of this land lies vacant or is underused. Massport has indicated interest in divesting itself of some of these properties. The future reuse of some of these properties for community use and for job-producing economic reuses is a serious issue.

Harbor-related activities provide employment for approximately 8,200 residents. More intense use of the harbor for maritime and commercial purposes consistent with other desired uses would double that figure. As a locus for shipping and commerce, recreation and conservation, new community development and other economic activity, the harbor offers exciting potentials for growth and economic return to the City and its harborfront neighborhoods.

# Summary and Recommendations



## Changing Function of Harborfront

8 Shipping and shipbuilding no longer occupy major portions of the harborside land, but it has only been during the past decade that portions of the harborfront have again begun to be lively, active, and accessible to the public. Major City-sponsored development programs are underway in South Boston, with the Boston Marine Industrial Park; in Charlestown, with the redevelopment of the former Charlestown Naval Shipyard; in Dorchester, with plans and programs to create a new mixed-income community at Columbia Point.

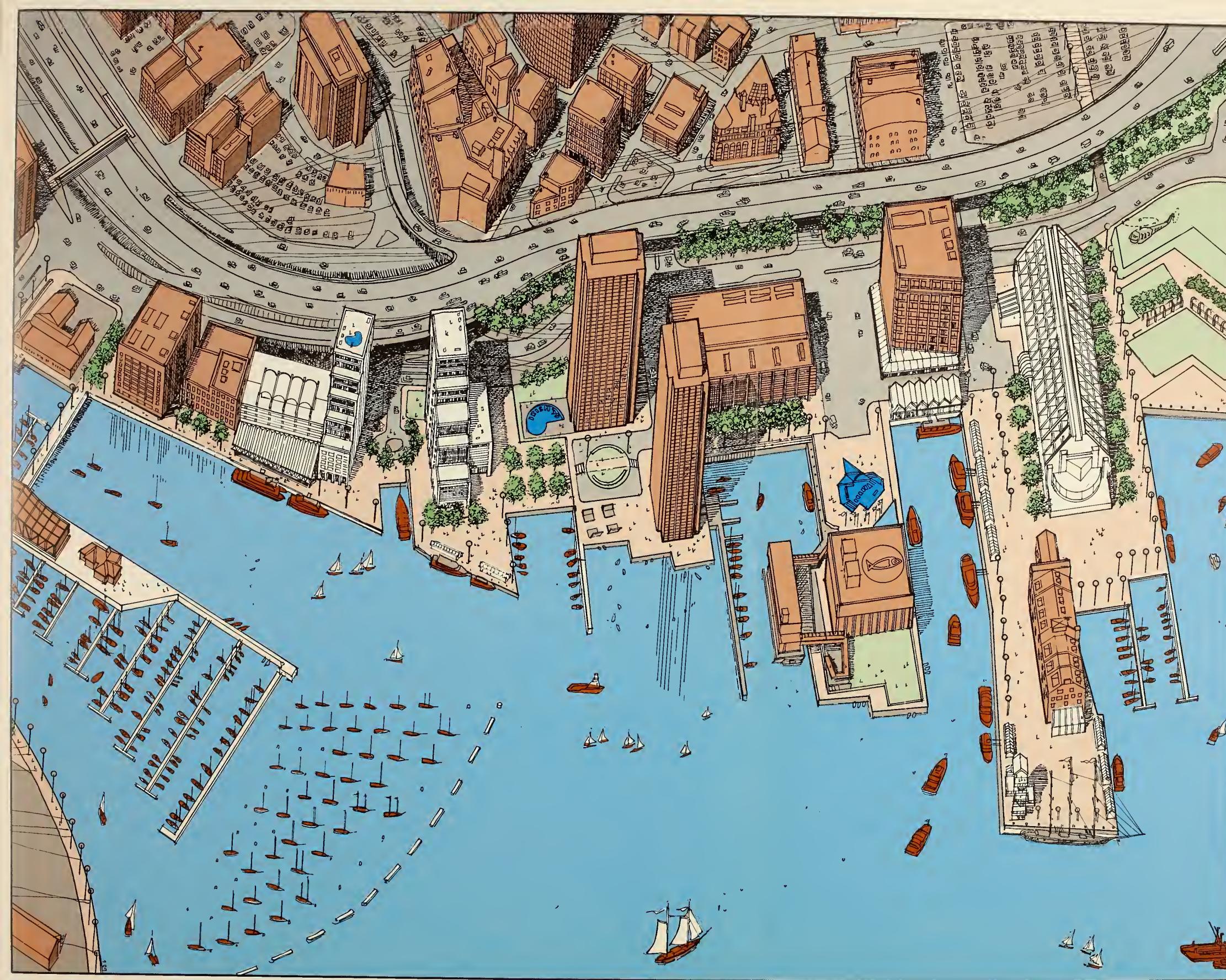
Despite the successful revitalization of the downtown waterfront area and several new waterfront parks in the North End, Charlestown, and East Boston, much of the harborfront land lies vacant and unproductive.

## Current Use of Harborfront

Bordering Boston Harbor are over 2,000 acres of land of which nearly 700 acres are vacant. About 550 acres are used for industrial purposes, 440 acres for public recreational purposes and 316 for commercial uses. Over three million people in the Greater Boston area live within 25 miles of the harbor, and in Boston alone, over 200,000 people live within walking distance of the harbor and the rivers entering the harbor.







Downtown/Fort Point Channel



## Outstanding Issues and Problems

- 10 Increasing concern and attention are just beginning to be given to some of the harbor's outstanding issues and problems:
  - Access to the harbor's islands, expanded water commuter service, and use of the Inner Harbor for intra-City trips.
  - Formulation of major policies for development and conservation of the harbor and its shoreline.
  - Conflicts between land needs of water dependent uses, and uses such as housing, and community open space which benefit from waterfront sites, but do not require them.
  - Inadequate public access to the harborfront.
  - Coordination and management of diverse public entities having overlapping jurisdictions in the harbor.
  - Future of underutilized properties held by the Massachusetts Port Authority.
  - Harbor pollution.
  - Inadequate public controls over private development which exclude public use of or access to the waterfront.
  - Vacant waterfront areas, and poor condition of many piers, bulkheads, and seawalls.

## Harbor Neighborhoods

It is this underutilized land which provides numerous opportunities for those Boston neighborhoods near the harbor.

### East Boston

With over half of East Boston's 480 acres of waterfront lying vacant, several opportunities should be pursued:

- Acquire and improve underutilized Massport properties on Piers 1, 3, and 4 for reuse as public open space, waterfront walkways, boat basins, community housing, and marine commercial purposes.
- From Piers 1, 3, and 4, continue a public waterfront edge to the new North Ferry Park, and north to Shore Plaza East.
- Develop the old East Boston Ferry Slip for ferry mooring and landings connecting with downtown and other harbor neighborhoods.
- Acquire and develop waterfront parcels between North Ferry Park and Heritage Apartments for community housing, open space, and commercial purposes.
- Develop the historic Donald McKay Shipyards and Bromfield Shipyards including public access to and along the harbor edge.

- Examine industrial development potential of vacant land areas along the Chelsea River.

### Charlestown

- Continue long range development program for Charlestown Naval Shipyard for housing, commercial, waterfront open space, public walkways and industrial uses.
- Continue public edge from the shipyard and USS Constitution Historic Site to Paul Revere Park at Charlestown Bridge.
- Adjacent to City Square, develop reuse program for all waterfront parcels from Charlestown Bridge to USS Constitution Historic Site, including acquisition and reuse of underutilized Massport owned Hoosiac Pier.
- Develop ferry landing from Charlestown Waterfront as part of Inner Harbor ferry system connecting historic site with downtown and other harbor neighborhoods.

### North End/North Station Area

- As part of the North Station planning and development program, continue public park and walkway edge from the Charles River Embankment and Science Museum area through North Station connecting with the New North End Waterfront Park.
- Complete improvement of North End Waterfront Park.
- Continue to secure appropriate private development of Sargent's Wharf together with public access to and along the harborfront.

11

### South Boston

- Continue with City and EDIC sponsored programs for Boston Marine Industrial Park for industrial, ship repair and future Third Containerport activities.
- Encourage EDIC's preliminary plans to develop public walkways through BMIP to the Dry Docks, industrial, and ship repair area.
- Continue to work with Massport on programs to rehabilitate Commonwealth and Fish Piers.
- Examine feasibility of Inner Harbor ferry landings in South Boston at Fort Independence connecting with downtown and historic points of interest along harborfront.

### Dorchester

- Continue development program for Columbia Point for new, mixed income housing, waterfront improvements, boat basin, and related commercial uses.
- Develop ferry landing at new Kennedy Library as part of Inner Harbor ferry system.
- Continue public waterfront edge from Carson Beach to Kennedy Library to Malibu Beach.
- Examine potential for reuse of inappropriate industrial parcels at Port Norfolk for community housing and public open space purposes.



## Location Map

### Downtown/Fort Point Channel

12 The Downtown Waterfront/Fort Point Channel area was chosen for detailed study as a prototype for policies outlined in this harbor study. Recent revitalization programs carried out in the Downtown Waterfront/Faneuil Market place area, accompanied by increased activity and traffic congestion have all drawn considerable attention to remaining unsolved issues. These issues include concerns for more adequate docking and terminal facilities for Harbor Islands, excursion and commuter boats; development proposals for the downtown waterfront and Fort Point Channel area which require public policy decisions; the continuing need for securing public access along the harborfront and areas for public landings and mooring of private pleasure boats. For purposes of investigating these and other issues along the downtown and Fort Point Channel waterfronts, the Boston Redevelopment Authority retained the firm of Sasaki Associates. Detailed recommendations have emerged from this effort and are summarized here.

#### Harbor Transportation

Development of two public terminal facilities is recommended: one between Long and Central Wharves adjacent to the Aquarium MBTA station; and one on Fosters Wharf as part of a multi-use complex of public terminal facilities, parking, bus loading and unloading, and restaurant.

#### Public Access

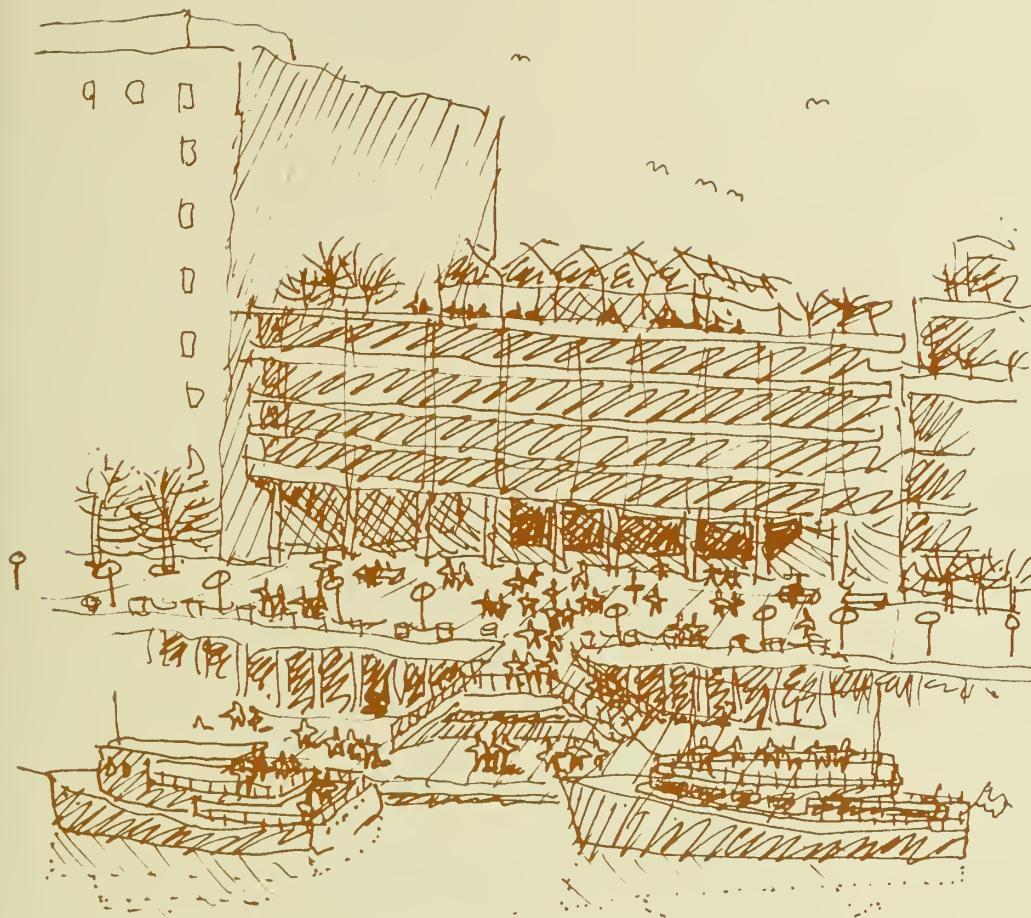
A system of public waterfront walkways is proposed along the water's edge from the downtown Waterfront Park to Northern Avenue and along either side of Fort Point Channel. These walkways would be developed by a combination of public entities, private interests, the latter through development controls placed upon new development parcels, or by acquisition of public easements through some existing privately owned parcels.

#### Public Open Space

Numerous additions to the downtown waterfront public open space system are proposed including the rehabilitation of the public open areas of Long Wharf, and small waterfront park areas at Rowes Wharf, Russia Wharf, Pier 1 and various locations along the Fort Point Channel.

#### Public Landings

Locations for public landings for small craft are recommended adjacent to Long Wharf, at Northern Avenue, and along Fort Point Channel. The tip of Long Wharf is recommended as the major public landing, but largely for historic boats and ships.



Public Terminal Facility  
Fosters Wharf

13



Public Landing  
Long Wharf

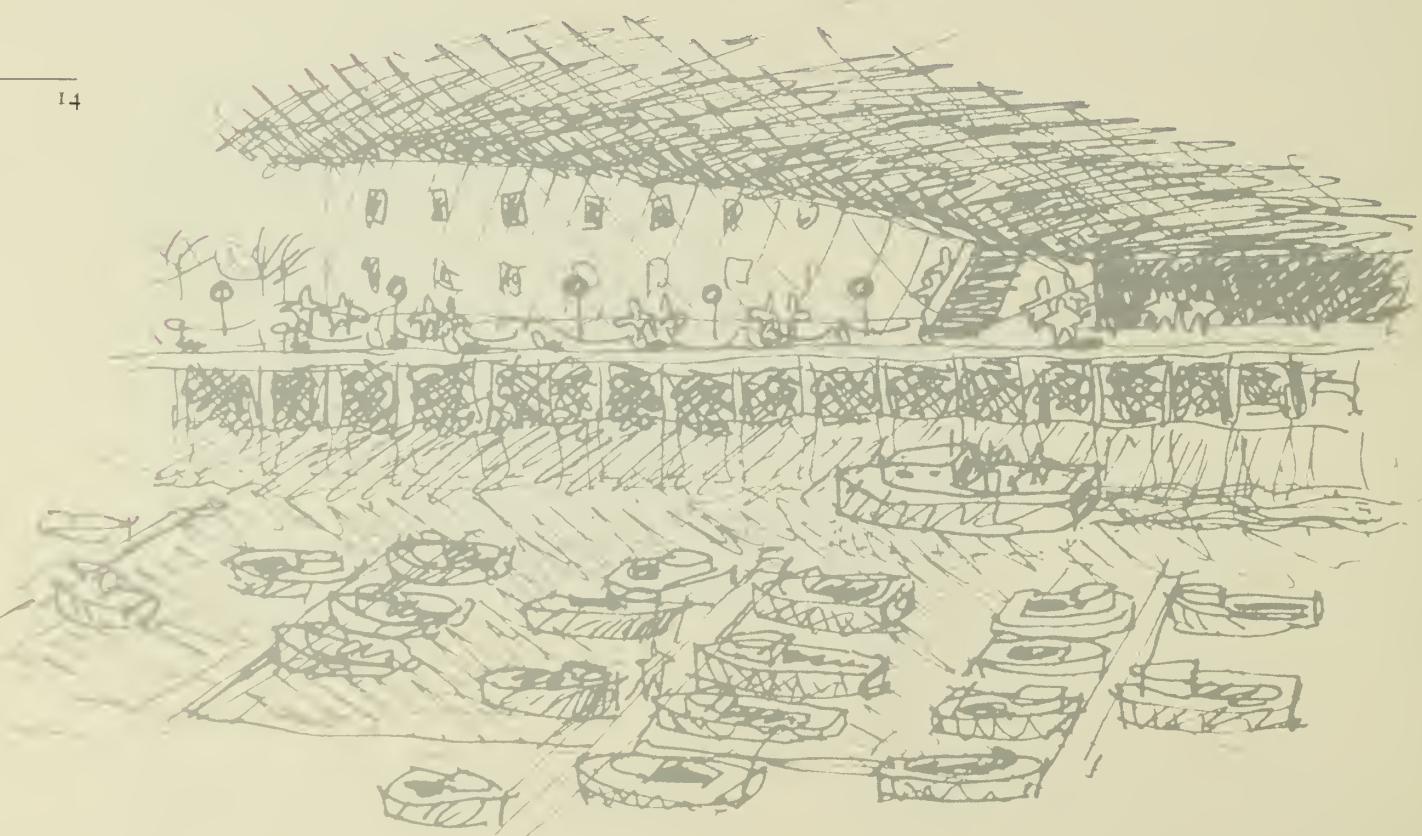
## Boat Basins

Major locations for new boat basins are recommended at the Northern Avenue Bridge and in Fort Point Channel.

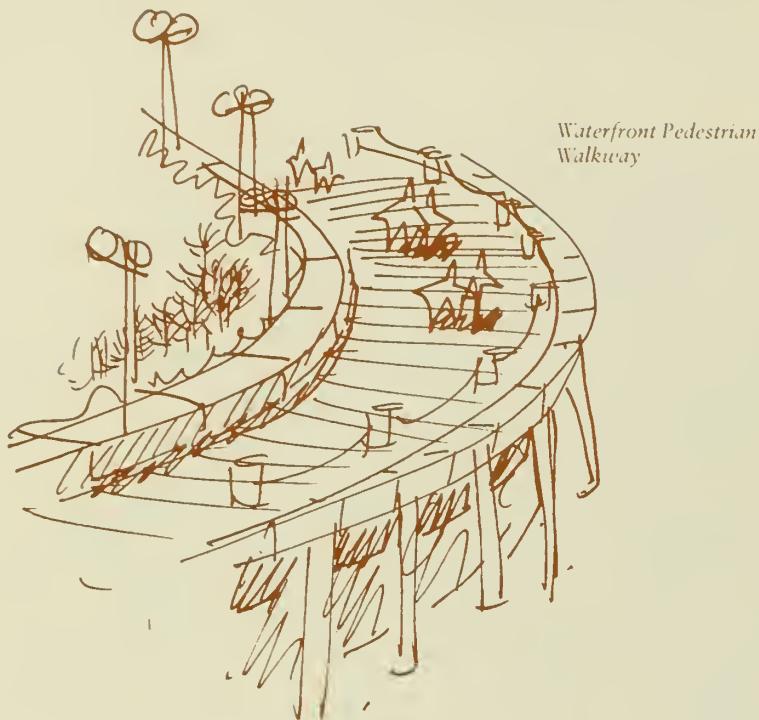
## Boston Harbor Historic Site

The most attractive way of acquiring, developing and assuring the long term maintenance of the historic areas and open space in the downtown waterfront-Fort Point Channel area is to have them designated as a part of the existing multi-site Boston National Historic Park. Therefore, it is recommended that necessary studies and negotiations be undertaken immediately to define an appropriate area for designation as the seventh National Historic Site in Boston.

*Northern Avenue Bridge  
Boat Basin Under*



237  
238  
239  
240  
241  
242  
243  
244  
245  
246  
247  
248  
249  
250  
251  
252  
253  
254  
255  
256  
257  
258  
259  
260  
261  
262  
263  
264  
265  
266  
267  
268  
269  
270  
271  
272  
273  
274  
275  
276  
277  
278  
279  
280  
281  
282  
283  
284  
285  
286  
287  
288  
289  
290  
291  
292  
293  
294  
295  
296  
297  
298  
299  
300  
301  
302  
303  
304  
305  
306  
307  
308  
309  
310  
311  
312  
313  
314  
315  
316  
317  
318  
319  
320  
321  
322  
323  
324  
325  
326  
327  
328  
329  
330  
331  
332  
333  
334  
335  
336  
337  
338  
339  
340  
341  
342  
343  
344  
345  
346  
347  
348  
349  
350  
351  
352  
353  
354  
355  
356  
357  
358  
359  
360  
361  
362  
363  
364  
365  
366  
367  
368  
369  
370  
371  
372  
373  
374  
375  
376  
377  
378  
379  
380  
381  
382  
383  
384  
385  
386  
387  
388  
389  
390  
391  
392  
393  
394  
395  
396  
397  
398  
399  
400  
401  
402  
403  
404  
405  
406  
407  
408  
409  
410  
411  
412  
413  
414  
415  
416  
417  
418  
419  
420  
421  
422  
423  
424  
425  
426  
427  
428  
429  
430  
431  
432  
433  
434  
435  
436  
437  
438  
439  
440  
441  
442  
443  
444  
445  
446  
447  
448  
449  
450  
451  
452  
453  
454  
455  
456  
457  
458  
459  
460  
461  
462  
463  
464  
465  
466  
467  
468  
469  
470  
471  
472  
473  
474  
475  
476  
477  
478  
479  
480  
481  
482  
483  
484  
485  
486  
487  
488  
489  
490  
491  
492  
493  
494  
495  
496  
497  
498  
499  
500  
501  
502  
503  
504  
505  
506  
507  
508  
509  
510  
511  
512  
513  
514  
515  
516  
517  
518  
519  
520  
521  
522  
523  
524  
525  
526  
527  
528  
529  
530  
531  
532  
533  
534  
535  
536  
537  
538  
539  
540  
541  
542  
543  
544  
545  
546  
547  
548  
549  
550  
551  
552  
553  
554  
555  
556  
557  
558  
559  
559  
560  
561  
562  
563  
564  
565  
566  
567  
568  
569  
569  
570  
571  
572  
573  
574  
575  
576  
577  
578  
579  
579  
580  
581  
582  
583  
584  
585  
586  
587  
588  
589  
589  
590  
591  
592  
593  
594  
595  
596  
597  
598  
599  
599  
600  
601  
602  
603  
604  
605  
606  
607  
608  
609  
609  
610  
611  
612  
613  
614  
615  
616  
617  
618  
619  
619  
620  
621  
622  
623  
624  
625  
626  
627  
628  
629  
629  
630  
631  
632  
633  
634  
635  
636  
637  
638  
639  
639  
640  
641  
642  
643  
644  
645  
646  
647  
648  
649  
649  
650  
651  
652  
653  
654  
655  
656  
657  
658  
659  
659  
660  
661  
662  
663  
664  
665  
666  
667  
668  
669  
669  
670  
671  
672  
673  
674  
675  
676  
677  
678  
679  
679  
680  
681  
682  
683  
684  
685  
686  
687  
688  
689  
689  
690  
691  
692  
693  
694  
695  
696  
697  
698  
699  
699  
700  
701  
702  
703  
704  
705  
706  
707  
708  
709  
709  
710  
711  
712  
713  
714  
715  
716  
717  
718  
719  
719  
720  
721  
722  
723  
724  
725  
726  
727  
728  
729  
729  
730  
731  
732  
733  
734  
735  
736  
737  
738  
739  
739  
740  
741  
742  
743  
744  
745  
746  
747  
748  
749  
749  
750  
751  
752  
753  
754  
755  
756  
757  
758  
759  
759  
760  
761  
762  
763  
764  
765  
766  
767  
768  
769  
769  
770  
771  
772  
773  
774  
775  
776  
777  
778  
779  
779  
780  
781  
782  
783  
784  
785  
786  
787  
788  
789  
789  
790  
791  
792  
793  
794  
795  
796  
797  
798  
799  
799  
800  
801  
802  
803  
804  
805  
806  
807  
808  
809  
809  
810  
811  
812  
813  
814  
815  
816  
817  
818  
819  
819  
820  
821  
822  
823  
824  
825  
826  
827  
828  
829  
829  
830  
831  
832  
833  
834  
835  
836  
837  
838  
839  
839  
840  
841  
842  
843  
844  
845  
846  
847  
848  
849  
849  
850  
851  
852  
853  
854  
855  
856  
857  
858  
859  
859  
860  
861  
862  
863  
864  
865  
866  
867  
868  
869  
869  
870  
871  
872  
873  
874  
875  
876  
877  
878  
879  
879  
880  
881  
882  
883  
884  
885  
886  
887  
888  
889  
889  
890  
891  
892  
893  
894  
895  
896  
897  
898  
899  
899  
900  
901  
902  
903  
904  
905  
906  
907  
908  
909  
909  
910  
911  
912  
913  
914  
915  
916  
917  
918  
919  
919  
920  
921  
922  
923  
924  
925  
926  
927  
928  
929  
929  
930  
931  
932  
933  
934  
935  
936  
937  
938  
939  
939  
940  
941  
942  
943  
944  
945  
946  
947  
948  
949  
949  
950  
951  
952  
953  
954  
955  
956  
957  
958  
959  
959  
960  
961  
962  
963  
964  
965  
966  
967  
968  
969  
969  
970  
971  
972  
973  
974  
975  
976  
977  
978  
979  
979  
980  
981  
982  
983  
984  
985  
986  
987  
988  
989  
989  
990  
991  
992  
993  
994  
995  
996  
997  
998  
999  
1000  
1001  
1002  
1003  
1004  
1005  
1006  
1007  
1008  
1009  
1009  
1010  
1011  
1012  
1013  
1014  
1015  
1016  
1017  
1018  
1019  
1019  
1020  
1021  
1022  
1023  
1024  
1025  
1026  
1027  
1028  
1029  
1029  
1030  
1031  
1032  
1033  
1034  
1035  
1036  
1037  
1038  
1039  
1039  
1040  
1041  
1042  
1043  
1044  
1045  
1046  
1047  
1048  
1049  
1049  
1050  
1051  
1052  
1053  
1054  
1055  
1056  
1057  
1058  
1059  
1059  
1060  
1061  
1062  
1063  
1064  
1065  
1066  
1067  
1068  
1069  
1069  
1070  
1071  
1072  
1073  
1074  
1075  
1076  
1077  
1078  
1079  
1079  
1080  
1081  
1082  
1083  
1084  
1085  
1086  
1087  
1088  
1089  
1089  
1090  
1091  
1092  
1093  
1094  
1095  
1096  
1097  
1098  
1099  
1099  
1100  
1101  
1102  
1103  
1104  
1105  
1106  
1107  
1108  
1109  
1109  
1110  
1111  
1112  
1113  
1114  
1115  
1116  
1117  
1118  
1119  
1119  
1120  
1121  
1122  
1123  
1124  
1125  
1126  
1127  
1128  
1129  
1129  
1130  
1131  
1132  
1133  
1134  
1135  
1136  
1137  
1138  
1139  
1139  
1140  
1141  
1142  
1143  
1144  
1145  
1146  
1147  
1148  
1149  
1149  
1150  
1151  
1152  
1153  
1154  
1155  
1156  
1157  
1158  
1159  
1159  
1160  
1161  
1162  
1163  
1164  
1165  
1166  
1167  
1168  
1169  
1169  
1170  
1171  
1172  
1173  
1174  
1175  
1176  
1177  
1178  
1179  
1179  
1180  
1181  
1182  
1183  
1184  
1185  
1186  
1187  
1188  
1189  
1189  
1190  
1191  
1192  
1193  
1194  
1195  
1196  
1197  
1198  
1199  
1199  
1200  
1201  
1202  
1203  
1204  
1205  
1206  
1207  
1208  
1209  
1209  
1210  
1211  
1212  
1213  
1214  
1215  
1216  
1217  
1218  
1219  
1219  
1220  
1221  
1222  
1223  
1224  
1225  
1226  
1227  
1228  
1229  
1229  
1230  
1231  
1232  
1233  
1234  
1235  
1236  
1237  
1238  
1239  
1239  
1240  
1241  
1242  
1243  
1244  
1245  
1246  
1247  
1248  
1249  
1249  
1250  
1251  
1252  
1253  
1254  
1255  
1256  
1257  
1258  
1259  
1259  
1260  
1261  
1262  
1263  
1264  
1265  
1266  
1267  
1268  
1269  
1269  
1270  
1271  
1272  
1273  
1274  
1275  
1276  
1277  
1278  
1279  
1279  
1280  
1281  
1282  
1283  
1284  
1285  
1286  
1287  
1288  
1289  
1289  
1290  
1291  
1292  
1293  
1294  
1295  
1296  
1297  
1298  
1299  
1299  
1300  
1301  
1302  
1303  
1304  
1305  
1306  
1307  
1308  
1309  
1309  
1310  
1311  
1312  
1313  
1314  
1315  
1316  
1317  
1318  
1319  
1319  
1320  
1321  
1322  
1323  
1324  
1325  
1326  
1327  
1328  
1329  
1329  
1330  
1331  
1332  
1333  
1334  
1335  
1336  
1337  
1338  
1339  
1339  
1340  
1341  
1342  
1343  
1344  
1345  
1346  
1347  
1348  
1349  
1349  
1350  
1351  
1352  
1353  
1354  
1355  
1356  
1357  
1358  
1359  
1359  
1360  
1361  
1362  
1363  
1364  
1365  
1366  
1367  
1368  
1369  
1369  
1370  
1371  
1372  
1373  
1374  
1375  
1376  
1377  
1378  
1379  
1379  
1380  
1381  
1382  
1383  
1384  
1385  
1386  
1387  
1388  
1389  
1389  
1390  
1391  
1392  
1393  
1394  
1395  
1396  
1397  
1398  
1399  
1399  
1400  
1401  
1402  
1403  
1404  
1405  
1406  
1407  
1408  
1409  
1409  
1410  
1411  
1412  
1413  
1414  
1415  
1416  
1417  
1418  
1419  
1419  
1420  
1421  
1422  
1423  
1424  
1425  
1426  
1427  
1428  
1429  
1429  
1430  
1431  
1432  
1433  
1434  
1435  
1436  
1437  
1438  
1439  
1439  
1440  
1441  
1442  
1443  
1444  
1445  
1446  
1447  
1448  
1449  
1449  
1450  
1451  
1452  
1453  
1454  
1455  
1456  
1457  
1458  
1459  
1459  
1460  
1461  
1462  
1463  
1464  
1465  
1466  
1467  
1468  
1469  
1469  
1470  
1471  
1472  
1473  
1474  
1475  
1476  
1477  
1478  
1479  
1479  
1480  
1481  
1482  
1483  
1484  
1485  
1486  
1487  
1488  
1489  
1489  
1490  
1491  
1492  
1493  
1494  
1495  
1496  
1497  
1498  
1499  
1499  
1500  
1501  
1502  
1503  
1504  
1505  
1506  
1507  
1508  
1509  
1509  
1510  
1511  
1512  
1513  
1514  
1515  
1516  
1517  
1518  
1519  
1519  
1520  
1521  
1522  
1523  
1524  
1525  
1526  
1527  
1528  
1529  
1529  
1530  
1531  
1532  
1533  
1534  
1535  
1536  
1537  
1538  
1539  
1539  
1540  
1541  
1542  
1543  
1544  
1545  
1546  
1547  
1548  
1549  
1549  
1550  
1551  
1552  
1553  
1554  
1555  
1556  
1557  
1558  
1559  
1559  
1560  
1561  
1562  
1563  
1564  
1565  
1566  
1567  
1568  
1569  
1569  
1570  
1571  
1572  
1573  
1574  
1575  
1576  
1577  
1578  
1579  
1579  
1580  
1581  
1582  
1583  
1584  
1585  
1586  
1587  
1588  
1589  
1589  
1590  
1591  
1592  
1593  
1594  
1595  
1596  
1597  
1598  
1599  
1599  
1600  
1601  
1602  
1603  
1604  
1605  
1606  
1607  
1608  
1609  
1609  
1610  
1611  
1612  
1613  
1614  
1615  
1616  
1617  
1618  
1619  
1619  
1620  
1621  
1622  
1623  
1624  
1625  
1626  
1627  
1628  
1629  
1629  
1630  
1631  
1632  
1633  
1634  
1635  
1636  
1637  
1638  
1639  
1639  
1640  
1641  
1642  
1643  
1644  
1645  
1646  
1647  
1648  
1649  
1649  
1650  
1651  
1652  
1653  
1654  
1655  
1656  
1657  
1658  
1659  
1659  
1660  
1661  
1662  
1663  
1664  
1665  
1666  
1667  
1668  
1669  
1669  
1670  
1671  
1672  
1673  
1674  
1675  
1676  
1677  
1678  
1679  
1679  
1680  
1681  
1682  
1683  
1684  
1685  
1686  
1687  
1688  
1689  
1689  
1690  
1691  
1692  
1693  
1694  
1695  
1696  
1697  
1698  
1699  
1699  
1700  
1701  
1702  
1703  
1704  
1705  
1706  
1707  
1708  
1709  
1709  
1710  
1711  
1712  
1713  
1714  
1715  
1716  
1717  
1718  
1719  
1719  
1720  
1721  
1722  
1723  
1724  
1725  
1726  
1727  
1728  
1729  
1729  
1730  
1731  
1732  
1733  
1734  
1735  
1736  
1737  
1738  
1739  
1739  
1740  
1741  
1742  
1743  
1744  
1745  
1746  
1747  
1748  
1749  
1749  
1750  
1751  
1752  
1753  
1754  
1755  
1756  
1757  
1758  
1759  
1759  
1760  
1761  
1762  
1763  
1764  
1765  
1766  
1767  
1768  
1769  
1769  
1770  
1771  
1772  
1773  
1774  
1775  
1776  
1777  
1778  
1779  
1779  
1780  
1781  
1782  
1783  
1784  
1785  
1786  
1787  
1788  
1789  
1789  
1790  
1791  
1792  
1793  
1794  
1795  
1796  
1797  
1798  
1799  
1799  
1800  
1801  
1802  
1803  
1804  
1805  
1806  
1807  
1808  
1809  
1809  
1810  
1811  
1812  
1813  
1814  
1815  
1816  
1817  
1818  
1819  
1819  
1820  
1821  
1822  
1823  
1824  
1825  
1826  
1827  
1828  
1829  
1829  
1830  
1831  
1832  
1833  
1834  
1835  
1836  
1837  
1838  
1839  
1839  
1840  
1841  
1842  
1843  
1844  
1845  
1846  
1847  
1848  
1849  
1849  
1850  
1851  
1852  
1853  
1854  
1855  
1856  
1857  
1858  
1859  
1859  
1860  
1861  
1862  
1863  
1864  
1865  
1866  
1867  
1868  
1869  
1869  
1870  
1871  
1872  
1873  
1874  
1875  
1876  
1877  
1878  
1879  
1879  
1880  
1881  
1882  
1883  
1884  
1885  
1886  
1887  
1888  
1889  
1889  
1890  
1891  
1892  
1893  
1894  
1895  
1896  
1897  
1898  
1899  
1899  
1900  
1901  
1902  
1903  
1904  
1905  
1906  
1907  
1908  
1909  
1909  
1910  
1911  
1912  
1913  
1914  
1915  
1916  
1917  
1918  
1919  
1919  
1920  
1921  
1922  
1923  
1924  
1925  
1926  
1927  
1928  
1929  
1929  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1933  
1934  
1935  
1936  
1937  
1938  
1939  
1939  
1940  
1941  
1942  
1943  
1944  
1945  
1946  
1947  
1948  
1949  
1949  
1950  
1951  
1952  
1953  
1954  
1955  
1956  
1957  
1958  
1959  
1959  
1960  
1961  
1962  
1963  
1964  
1965  
1966  
1967  
1968  
1969  
1969  
1970  
1971  
1972  
1973  
1974  
1975  
1976  
1977  
1978  
1979  
1979  
1980  
1981  
1982  
1983  
1984  
1985  
1986  
1987  
1988  
1989  
1989  
1990  
1991  
1992  
1993  
1994  
1995  
1996  
1997  
1998  
1999  
1999  
2000  
2001  
2002  
2003  
2004  
2005  
2006  
2007  
2008  
2009  
2009  
2010  
2011  
2012  
2013  
2014  
2015  
2016  
2017  
2018  
2019  
2019  
2020  
2021  
2022  
2023  
2024  
2025  
2026  
2027  
2028  
2029  
2029  
2030  
2031  
2032  
2033  
2034  
2035  
2036  
2037  
2038  
2039  
2039  
2040  
2041  
2042  
2043  
2044  
2045  
2046  
2047  
2048  
2049  
2049  
2050  
2051  
2052  
2053  
2054  
2055  
2056  
2057  
2058  
2059  
2059  
2060  
2061  
2062  
2063  
2064  
2065  
2066  
2067  
2068  
2069  
2069  
2070  
2071  
2072  
2073  
2074  
2075  
2076  
2077  
2078  
2079  
2079  
2080  
2081  
2082  
2083  
2084  
2085  
2086  
2087  
2088  
2089  
2089  
2090  
2091  
2092  
2093  
2094  
2095  
2096  
2097  
2098  
2099  
2099  
2100  
2101  
2102  
2103  
2104  
2105  
2106  
2107  
2108  
2109  
2109  
2110  
2111  
2112  
2113  
2114  
2115  
2116  
2117  
2118  
2119  
2119  
2120  
2121  
2122  
2123  
2124  
2125  
2126  
2127  
2128  
2129  
2129  
2130  
2131  
2132  
2133  
2134  
2135  
2136  
2137  
2138  
2139  
2139  
2140  
2141  
2142  
2143  
2144  
2145  
2146  
2147  
2148  
2149  
2149  
2150  
2151  
2152  
2153  
2154  
2155  
2156  
2157  
2158  
2159  
2159  
2160  
2161  
2162  
2163  
2



Waterfront Pedestrian Walkway

## Funding Strategy

16

Given the scope and magnitude of the proposals for the Downtown Waterfront/Fort Point Channel area, it is obvious that their implementation will require a coordinated funding strategy. Many of the proposals are regional in scope, benefiting and serving people beyond the City of Boston. Responsibilities for funding therefore must lie jointly between the federal and state governments and well as with the City. In addition, some proposals, particularly those related to new private development opportunities will be the responsibility of private entities.

At the broadest levels, funding the proposals could come from two federal sources—1) the Kennedy-Moakley Harbor Legislation for Boston Harbor which has been submitted to Congress for passage and for \$20 million appropriation; and 2) an amendment to the legislation for the six-site Boston Historic Park and appropriation of funds to include the Boston Harbor Historic Site as an additional site for management and improvement by the National Park Service.

In conjunction with or as alternatives to the two broad levels of funding sources described above, numerous other funding strategies could be pursued for various recommendations in this study.

### Long Wharf

Phase One of the improvements totalling \$1.7 million to Long Wharf will begin in 1980 funded by grants from the federal Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) and Boston's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Remaining improvements to Long Wharf should be funded by a Phase Two HCRS grant, and by state and federal transportation funds for harbor transportation related improvements.

### Harbor Terminals

The recommendations for the two terminal facilities; one between Long and Central Wharves, another major terminal on Fosters Wharf should be implemented by the State Executive Office of Transportation and Construction with Urban Systems funds and additional state bonding authority for improvement of harbor transportation facilities.

### Harbor Ferry and Commuter Boat Docking and Mooring Facilities

Docking and mooring boats, ramps and water edge treatment including new bulkheads, outdoor public waiting areas, shelters and landscaping improvements for harbor ferry and commuter boats should be implemented and funded by the State Executive Office of Transportation and Construction with Urban Systems funds and Commonwealth bonds. Such improvements are proposed along Long Wharf, along Atlantic Avenue between Long and Central Wharves, Fosters Wharf, and the public water edge along Rowes and Fosters Wharves.

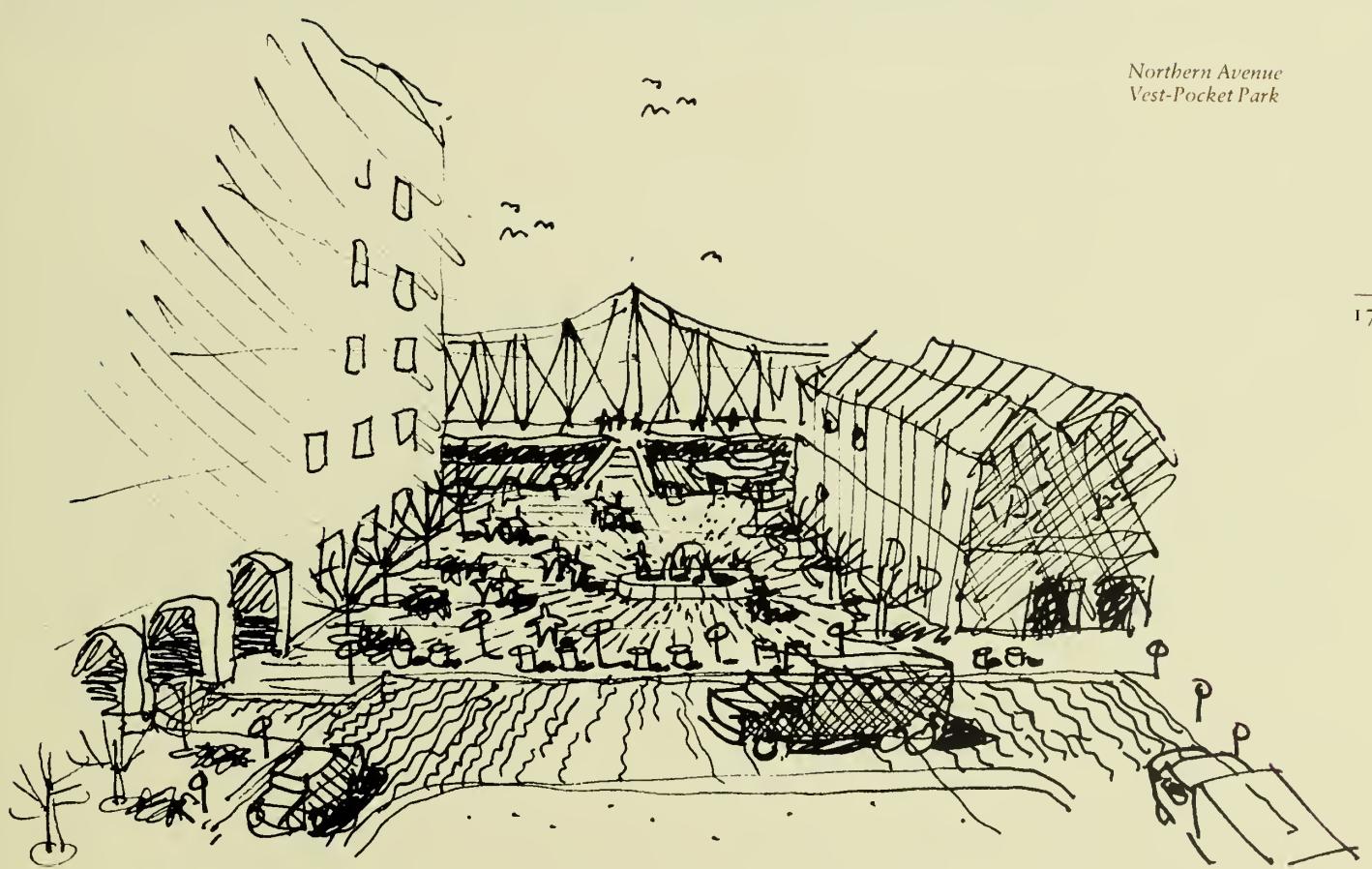
### Waterfront Pedestrian Walkways

Connecting public access links along the harborfront should be funded from federal Heritage Conservation and Recreation monies. Examples would include public access through India Wharf to Rowes Wharf, from Fosters Wharf to the Northern Avenue Bridge, and other connecting links along Fort Point Channel.

### Private Improvement for Public Use.

Similar to the park constructed by the Children's and Transportation Museums for public use along Fort Point Channel, similar privately funded improvements accessible by the public are already part of the rehabilitation program for Russia Wharf, Rowes Wharf, and should be incorporated as part of other new private development proposals within the area.

*Northern Avenue  
Vest-Pocket Park*



# Harbor Neighborhoods

*Downtown Boston  
from East Boston | BRA*



## Introduction

18 Boston's harbor neighborhoods extend from Chelsea to Quincy and include East Boston, Charlestown, Downtown/Fort Point Channel, South Boston and Dorchester. The waterfronts of many of these neighborhoods were formerly Boston's "front doors" serving as the focus of Boston's maritime commerce and the center of employment for people living in these neighborhoods. While at one time, shipping activity of one kind or another took up virtually every inch of harborside land, today many docks lie empty and decaying. At the same time, conflicting interests compete for waterfront land—either to develop it or to protect it for public use or some possible future need.

Public access has become more critical and more in demand as waterfront areas have been redeveloped. In many neighborhoods, local residents have long been cut off from the water by military installations, expressways, port facilities and private development.

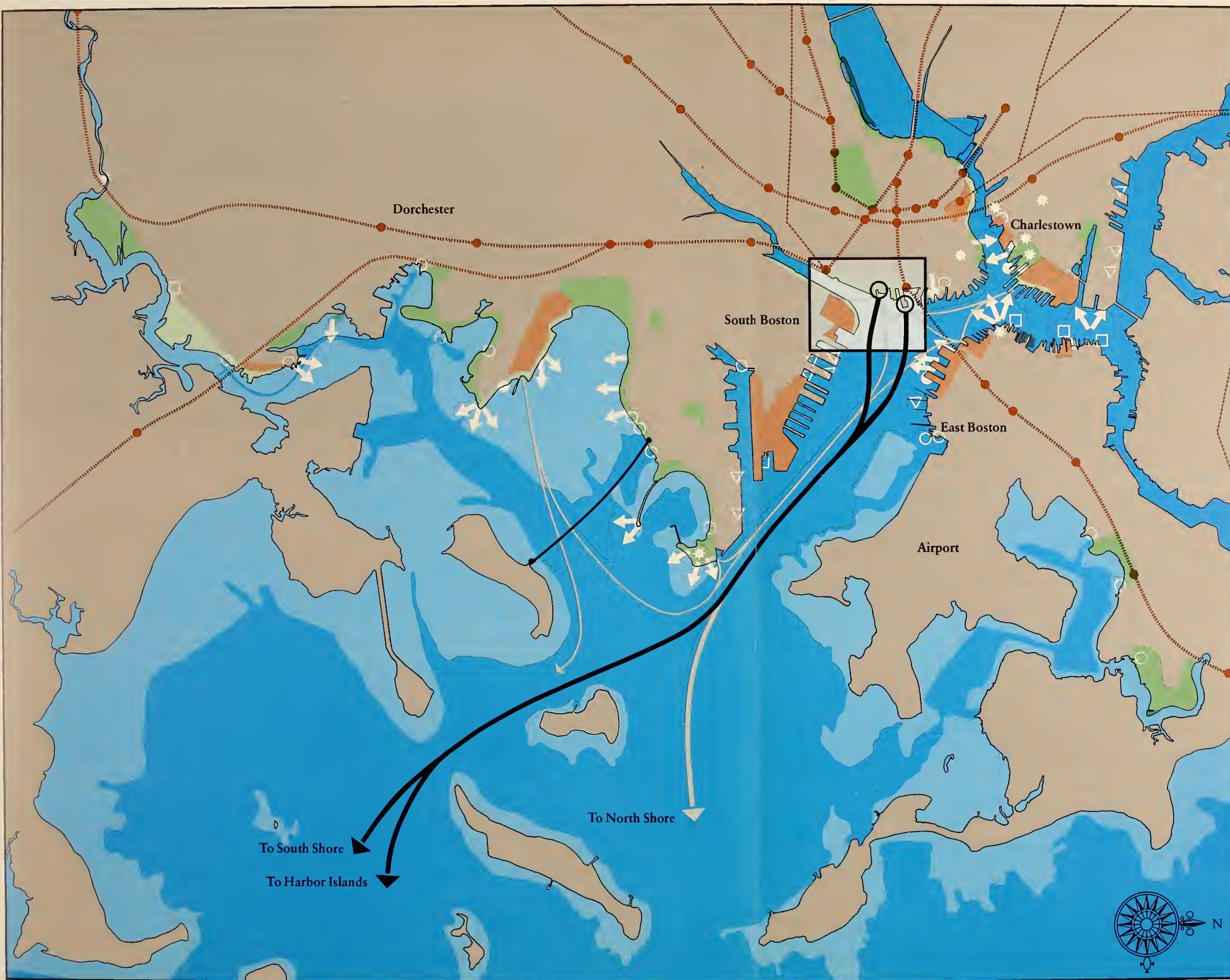
Pollution of the harbor is as critical as ever, a deterrent to expanded boating use, and sometimes the cause of the closing of existing beaches. Use of the Inner Harbor as part of Boston's transportation system remains for the most part unexplored and access to the harbor's islands by public ferries is severely limited. The docking facilities for such purposes are in urgent need of improvement.

Only recently have portions of the harborfront become examples of the many opportunities that exist. The

popularity and success of the downtown waterfront from Quincy Market, to Waterfront Park, to the restored historic structures have made Boston an envied prototype of public and private improvement programs for waterfronts throughout the nation. New parks and walkways are making waterfronts in East Boston, Charlestown, South Boston and the North End more attractive, and accessible to the public. The waterfront is also becoming more economically productive with the development of job producing industrial parks in South Boston and the possibility of developing some industrial jobs on a section of the Charlestown Naval Shipyard.







## Harborfront Opportunities

- Proposed
- Existing
- Boat Lines
- Inner Harbor Ferry System
- Terminal Facilities
- Ferry Dock Landings
- Marinas, Yacht Clubs, Boat Basins
- Ship Repair-Building
- Commercial Shipping Activities
- Historic Features
- Views
- Public Open Space
- Potential Public Open Space
- MBTA Service
- Harborfront Development Opportunities

Commonwealth Pier  
Courtesy of C. Dick  
Norton Studio



(CZM)



## Land Use

20 Land parcels bordering Boston Harbor total about 2,112 acres, not including Logan International Airport. Approximately one-third is vacant (694 acres), and one-quarter used for industrial purposes (553 acres). Another 316 acres are used for commercial purposes, 438 acres for recreational uses, and the remaining 112 acres for residential purposes.

Of the 694 acres classified as 'vacant,' nearly three quarters are either totally vacant land with no structures and unused, or vacant with unused structures. The remaining quarter is vacant, but used for outdoor storage or for open parking.

A surprisingly large percentage of the total harborfront land is used for water-dependent purposes—nearly one-half of the total 2,112 acres. Water-dependent maritime uses comprise about one-quarter of the harborfront area, water-dependent commercial uses about 7 percent, and water-dependent public uses, about 19 percent.

As would be anticipated, the largest single land owner is the Massachusetts Port Authority (2,484 acres), including Logan International Airport. Massport-owned properties include, in addition to the airport, the Castle Island Containerport Terminal (101 acres), Moran Containerport Terminal along the Mystic (57 acres), Hoosiac Pier (8 acres), piers in East Boston (35 acres), Commonwealth Pier (11 acres), Fish Pier (8 acres), and about 14 acres of land leased from the United States Government at the South Boston Army Base.

This land inventory begins to lend an understanding of the various uses of the harborfront. These facts suggest that 1) considerable improvement opportunities are available along Boston's harbor, given the large amount of vacant and underused land; and 2) relatively little of the harbor is readily accessible to the public (about 18 percent).



*East Boston Ferry,  
circa 1900 (Collection  
of Robert Stanley)*

## East Boston

The East Boston waterfront has been important in Boston's commercial history since the early 1800's. In the 19th century, East Boston was an important business area whose shipyards were world-famous. The Donald McKay shipyard was the site of the building of 21 clipper ships in addition to schooners, ocean packers, warships and steam vessels. Shipyard activities declined in the late 1800's and East Boston became a predominantly residential area, spurred by the immigrant influx in the early 1900's.

About 480 acres of property lie along East Boston's waterfront, not including Logan Airport. Of this over half is either vacant or underutilized (255 acres). An additional 126 acres are used for commercial and industrial purposes. Due to the MDC-operated Constitution Beach and the Bell Isle Marshes, East Boston has 91 acres of waterfront land available for public recreation. Initiatives taken by the City in acquisition and development of Jeffries Point Park and the new North Ferry park off Summer Street provide important public access to the East Boston shoreline.

Other recent improvements to the water's edge have transformed formerly vacant areas to uses such as the new East Boston Harborside Community school, and housing at Shore Plaza, both with good public access to the shoreline.

Few areas of the Boston shoreline have more potential for community improvement than the East Boston water-

front. Although it served the clipper era well, present port uses are constrained by lack of space and inadequate access roads. Piers 1, 3, and 4, owned by Massport, once housed an active general cargo terminal, but the piers are now unused or used only occasionally for tying up out-of-service ships or surface storage of vehicles.

Continued non-use of this important segment of the harborfront is unacceptable to the community and the City. Increasing East Boston's supply of open space along the water, gaining additional public access to the water, boat launch areas, and walkways, combined with new community housing and employment are obvious opportunities for these piers. Similar public and private development opportunities exist along other underutilized portions of East Boston's waterfront between North Ferry Park and the new Heritage Apartments elderly housing, and along Border Street on one of the Donald McKay shipbuilding locations, and the Old Bromfield shipbuilding properties. These opportunities could be realized while preserving East Boston's historic marine industrial waterfront and providing jobs and tax revenues.



## Charlestown

22 Older than Boston, Charlestown was founded in 1629 by a small group of settlers from the Massachusetts Bay Company. The Revolution saw the burning of Charlestown, its immediate rebuilding after the war, and, in 1786, its connection to the Boston peninsula by the old Charlestown bridge. With the influx of Irish immigrants, its population doubled in the 1850's. The Charlestown Navy Yard, built in the early 1800's served as the town's chief employer building 35 warships between 1825 and 1868. From the earliest times, commercial and residential areas have been separate with housing situated on the hillsides and industry located along the water's edge. This distinction is even more pronounced today with the heavy industrial character of the waterfront separated from the neighborhood by the Tobin Bridge on the east and the Boston and Maine Railroad to the north. The eastern waterfront is dominated by the former Boston Naval Shipyard, and the northern waterfront along the Mystic is industrialized with marine terminals including the Moran Containerport, Wiggins Terminal and warehouses and dock facilities for ships carrying raw sugar, cement, scrap and general cargo.

Charlestown's waterfront properties comprise about 342 acres, nearly all of which are used for commercial and industrial purposes (178 acres), or are predominantly vacant but used for commercial and industrial outdoor storage (135 acres). Remaining land uses, comprising 10 percent of the total, consist of some residential uses along the Little Mystic Channel and public recreational areas

on the east waterfront (USS Constitution Park and Paul Revere Landing) and public open space areas along Little Mystic Channel.

Only in the past half-decade, has Charlestown begun to realize new opportunities on the waterfront. The closing of the Boston Naval Shipyard at Charlestown led to the establishment of the 27 acre USS Constitution National Historic Site and the beginning phases of the City-sponsored redevelopment of the 103 acre shipyard by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The renovated shipyard will provide not only new and rehabilitated housing, but new waterfront parks, walkways, boat basins, and eventually a totally public new edge along the waterfront for the Charlestown community. Additional waterfront improvements have included the recently completed Paul Revere Landing Park at the northern edge of the new Charlestown Dam, the Bunker Hill Pavilion, and the Constitution Marina, used for the mooring of privately-owned boats. Further opportunities for Charlestown's waterfront lie between the Charlestown Bridge and the Bunker Hill Pavilion, where deteriorating wharves and the underutilized Massport owned Hoosiac Pier offer new and exciting opportunities for additional public access to the harbor combined with appropriate new private development adjacent to City Square.



Port of Boston, date not certain (Courtesy of The Peabody Museum of Salem)

## Downtown/Fort Point Channel

The wharves of Boston's waterfront were the focus of the city's historic role in maritime commerce. Major landfill and "wharfing out" began in this area in the 17th century with the building of Faneuil Hall, the development of Long Wharf and State Street, headed by the old State House. No other area of the City has gone through so many periods of construction and renovation.

Major changes began in the 1800's, when the bulk of the brick and granite warehouse wharf structures were built. The past decade has seen the waterfront transformed into new and recycled housing, shops, parks, walkways, and markets with much of its historic character preserved. Views of the harbor have been created and small boats crowd the few available private mooring spaces.

Along the North End's waterfront, additional park areas have been created by the City providing this dense neighborhood with active and passive recreational areas along the harbor.

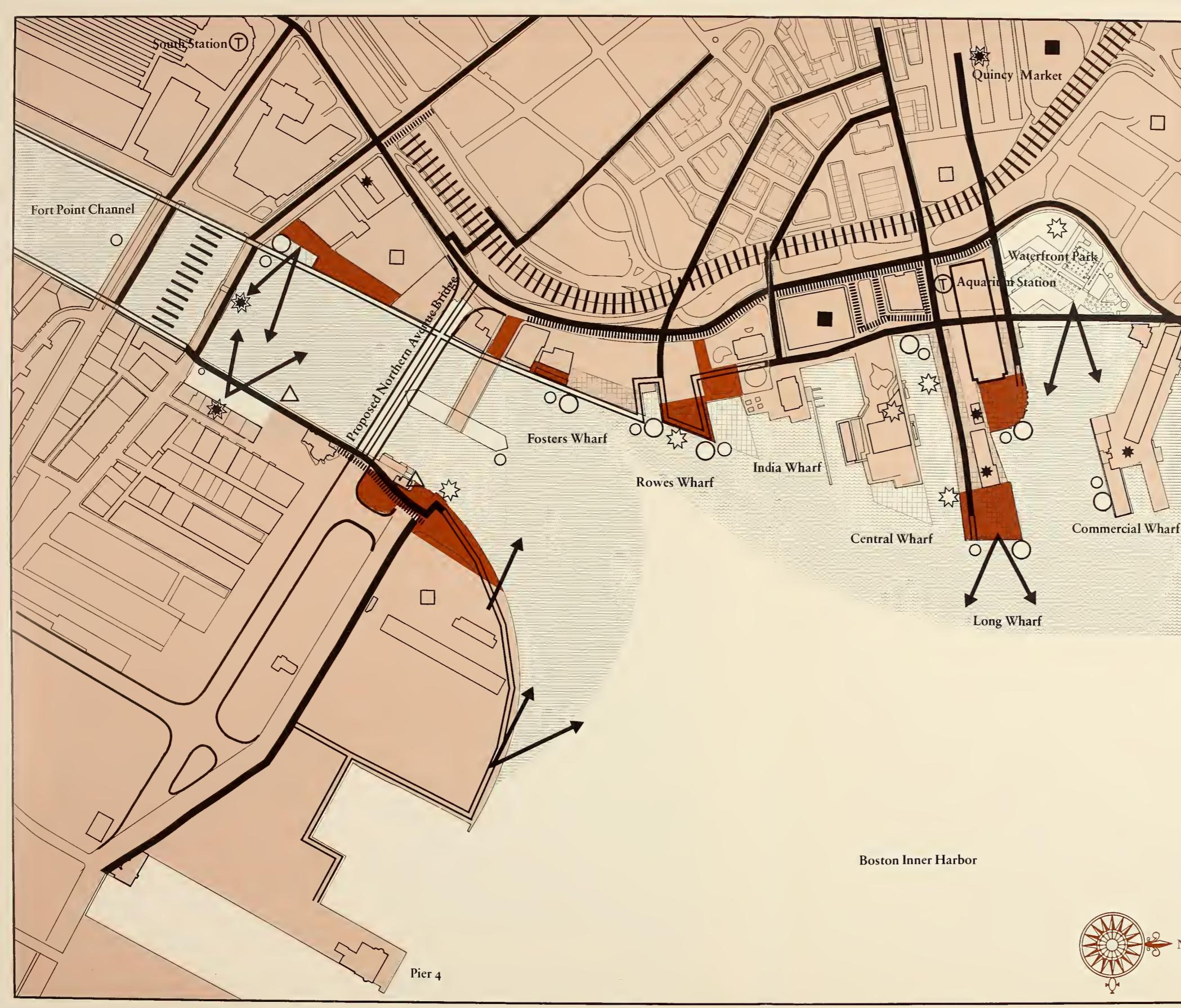
Even with the dramatic changes along this waterfront, many opportunities remain. Underutilized land along the Charles River in the North Station area is currently under detailed planning study by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. It is not unreasonable to consider the eventual extension of the Charles River embankment through the North Station area to the new North End Park as a significant part of a public-private development program for this area. Vacant land on Sargent, Rowes and Fosters

Wharves is suitable for private development as well as for expanding public access along the downtown waterfront. Unravelling the tangle and confusion of commuter and excursion boats, and harbor ferries, and providing more adequate terminal facilities, mooring space for private craft and public landings represent major opportunities. These as well as other waterfront improvements in this area are reviewed in the following section of this study.









## Opportunities and Constraints

- Potential Terminal Facility
- Wharf Repairs Necessary
- Existing Public Pedestrian Access
- Potential Public Pedestrian Access
- Existing Public Open Space
- Potential Public Open Space
- |||| Circulation Conflict
- ◀ Views
- || Visual Distruption
- ★ Tourist Attraction
- ★ Historic Features
- Potential Public Landings for Private Pleasure Boats
- ≡ Protected Mooring Area
- ≈ Unprotected Mooring Area
- Parking Lot
- Parking Garage

Marine Park, South Boston, circa 1890's  
Halliday Historic Photograph Co.  
Courtesy of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities



## South Boston

26 South Boston developed in the 1800's; spurred by immigrants from Ireland who found jobs in nearby foundries, lumber, wool and textile industries. Its shorelines offer the extremes between industrial and marine related commercial uses to the north, and the residential and public beach areas overlooking Dorchester Bay and the harbor to the south. About half of South Boston's 600 acres of waterfront property are used for commercial and industrial purposes, while 233 acres are used for public recreation along the southern shoreline. Large amounts of vacant and under-utilized properties are situated along portions of Fort Point Channel and at Piers 1, 2 and 3.

Large tracts of industrial property mark the northern part of South Boston. The City's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation seized the chance provided by the closing of the South Boston Naval Annex, to create Boston's largest industrial park, the Boston Marine Industrial Park (BM IP). A portion of the site will eventually be the location of Boston's Third Containerport. Adjacent to BM IP, the Massport Fish Pier is being rehabilitated; Commonwealth Pier is under study for upgrading for major convention/exhibit space; and private development proposals for Piers 1, 2 and 3, the former Penn Central Yards, and Boston Wharf Company properties are numerous.

Many of these developments will have a profound impact upon a major segment of Boston's harborfront. Productive economic re-uses and public access will transform

the Fort Point Channel area, while historic preservation efforts will maintain its physical character and architectural unity. The recent efforts of the Children's and Transportation Museums utilizing a recycled building and creating a public park along the channel can serve as a model for future development efforts.

South Boston's southern waterfront, unlike that of any other neighborhood along the harborfront, is lined with people swimming, fishing and picnicking. From the historic Fort Independence at Castle Island to Carson Beach, and including Pleasure Bay, Marine Park, City Point Beach and the L Street Beach and Bath House, its shoreline overlooks the bay, the harbor, and some of the harbor's islands and is available for continuous public use and enjoyment.

*Boston Harbor, Rose Standish, 1914 (N. L. Stebbins, photographer. Courtesy of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities)*



*Lawleys from Tenean Beach, Dorchester, circa 1900-1910 (Courtesy of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities)*



## Dorchester

Dorchester, settled in 1630, became a farming area with Dorchester Bay and the Neponset River providing the basis for small commercial villages at Lower Mills and near Commercial Point. However, it shares little of Boston's maritime history and has relatively little public access to the waterfront. Although parcels of land abutting the bay total over 610 acres, the Southeast Expressway comprises a large part of the waterfront. Much of the shoreline is vacant (about 259 acres) and 72 acres are used for public purposes. Industrial and commercial uses occupy another 200 acres.

The shoreline is lined with such uses as the former Hallet Street Dump, Port Norfolk, the Boston Gas Company property on Commercial Point shared with the Old Colony Yacht Club, Columbia Point, and the heavily used Malibu and Tenean beaches owned by MDC. Columbia Point recently became the home of a campus of the University of Massachusetts and the Kennedy Library. The City and the Columbia Point Community Task Force are pursuing the construction of new housing, public open space and supporting public and private facilities here.

In Port Norfolk, inappropriate waterfront uses should be relocated to open development options for housing and public open space. Also, implementation of MDC plans for recreation on the former Hallet Street Dump property would improve the shoreline.

## Public Transportation

The downtown waterfront presently serves as the embarking and arrival point for a variety of boats utilizing the harbor as a major transportation route. Commuter boats to the South Shore, ferries to the Harbor Islands, excursion boats, launch boats, and concert cruise boats all compete for docking space at Long and Rowes Wharves. Facilities for these activities are limited and in need of improvement. Detailed recommendations are contained in the following section of this study.

In addition, opportunities exist for implementing an Inner Harbor public ferry system connecting all of Boston's harborfront neighborhoods, servicing normal intra-city trips as well as facilitating the millions of visitor trips made annually to points of interest throughout Boston Harbor.

Already under discussion are ferry systems which would link the former ferry dock in East Boston with Downtown and a public ferry service linking the USS Constitution National Historic Park and the former Charlestown Shipyard with Downtown and the Kennedy Library at Columbia Point. The opportunities for expanded ferry and water taxi service are numerous. Boston's Inner Harbor remains an underused transportation asset for East Boston, Charlestown, Downtown, South Boston, Dorchester, as well as for the Harbor Islands and for expanded commuter routes to the South and North Shores.

# Downtown/Fort Point Channel

Waterfront Park  
Terry McKay,  
photographer



## Introduction

28 Through World War II, the downtown and Fort Point Channel waterfronts were active parts of Boston's maritime commerce. Since the end of the war, technological changes in the shipping industry resulted in the concentration of these uses at specialized facilities elsewhere in the City. When the Waterfront Urban Renewal Area was designated in 1965, many of the wharves in this area were abandoned and deteriorating. However, much has happened in the last decade. The urban renewal project allowed for the massive infusion of public funds which was quickly followed by private investment. Renovations of wharf buildings and granite warehouses for residential use, the construction of the Walk-to-the-Sea, downtown Waterfront Park, the New England Aquarium, the Museum of Transportation, the Children's Museum, and the Tea Party Ship Museum are some examples of the redevelopment which has begun to fill the gaps left by the departure of commercial shipping.

During the next decade, the downtown Fort Point Channel waterfront will continue to change. The hotel on Long Wharf, the refurbishment of the New England Telephone and Telegraph building, the proposed apartment complex for Rowes-Fosters Wharves, renovations to the 19th century buildings along Fort Point Channel for residential and commercial use, multi-faceted development on Piers 1-3, and rehabilitation of Russia Wharf are only a few of the projects now under consideration. There are also transportation proposals such as a renovated Aquarium Station, a new, relocated Northern Avenue Bridge, addi-

tional commuter boat and harbor shuttle service and improvements to South Station, which will become realities.

However, public and private entities and individuals have different objectives for this portion of the waterfront. As development pressures intensify, unravelling the tangle of old and new conflicting uses becomes increasingly important.

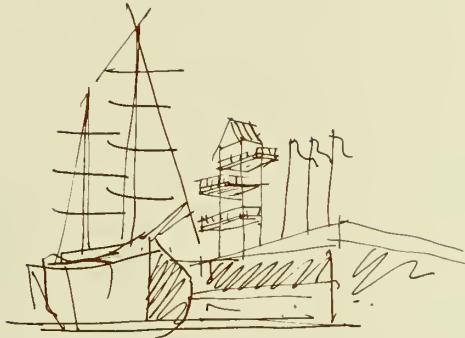
Because of the presence of many unresolved issues and the need for public policy guidance, the Boston Redevelopment Authority felt it appropriate to study this portion of the waterfront in detail. A development framework needed to be formulated which would insure public access to and along the water's edge, public open spaces to accommodate the increasing numbers of people who will live, work and visit the waterfront, improved connections between the MBTA and water transportation, and mooring space for the different categories of boats compatible with the scale and character of the downtown waterfront.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority retained Sasaki Associates of Watertown, Massachusetts, and designers of Boston's Waterfront Park to assist in the preparation of land and water use guidelines for its use in guiding and resolving development conflicts in this area.



The following planning goals were identified during the course of the study:

- To assure adequate public (including the handicapped public) access to, and open space along, the water's edge.
- To better accommodate boating uses, to anticipate their growth and to provide an orderly program for their expansion, considering both waterside and landside space and functional needs.
- To create opportunities for sound, higher density development that will be compatible with other waterfront uses.
- To improve linkages between the MBTA and commuter/tourist/excursion boats.
- To preserve and enhance environmental and navigational conditions in the harbor.
- To assure that contemporary design and new public spaces reflect the waterfront's historic past.
- To propose a public strategy for dealing with harbor issues.





## Existing Conditions

The study area includes the area from Commercial Wharf south to and including the Fort Point Channel, around Piers 1-3 to Pier 4. It encompasses parts of the Faneuil Hall Marketplace, the North End, Financial District, South Station, and the South Postal Annex of the United States Post Office. The primary focus is on the area east of the Central Artery along the downtown harborfront and the shoreline of Fort Point Channel.

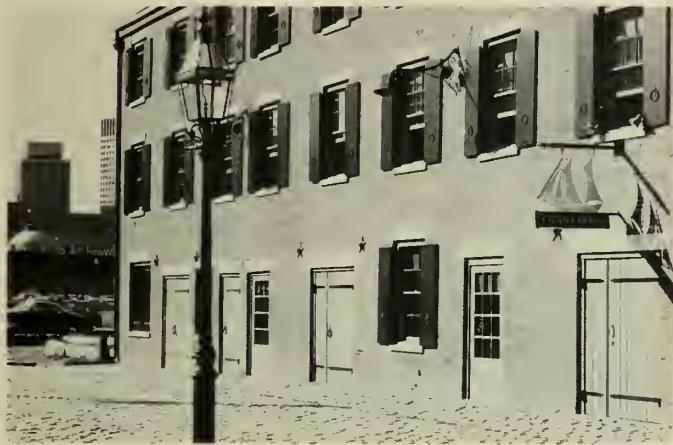
The area is bounded on the north by the North End and waterfront residential neighborhoods and on the south-east by the emerging Fort Point Channel area with its old warehouses, new museums, art galleries, offices, and apartments.

### Landside Uses

At the northern edge of the downtown Waterfront Park, Long Wharf is the site of the renovated Chart and Customs Houses, the temporary ticket booths, and docking facilities of Boston Harbor Cruises and the Bay State, Spray, and Provincetown Steamship Company, and the berthing space of the Boston Pilots. A hotel, wharf reconstruction, and a public open space system are planned for Long Wharf.

East of Long Wharf, the New England Telephone Building, originally a major switching center, is now being converted to office use. Then comes the Aquarium and its

*Chart House*  
Long Wharf (BRA)



*The Spray*  
Long Wharf  
(Sasaki Associates)



barge "Discovery" followed by the twin Harbor Towers apartments.

Below Harbor Towers lie Rowes-Fosters Wharves, owned by the BRA and leased to a parking concern and the Massachusetts Bay Lines. Almost half of Fosters and about one-fifth of Rowes are fenced off from public use because of the unsafe, deteriorated conditions.

South of these wharves, the A.P. Wilcox Warehouse and the Appraisers Building owned by the United States General Services Administration (G.S.A.) are in good condition except for the shed and pier behind the warehouse which are slowly falling into the water. The G.S.A. plans to renovate its buildings for the use of the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal offices.

The Northern Avenue Bridge, a swinging bridge manned 24 hours a day by bridge tenders who occupy the small building at the northern terminus of the bridge's support structure spans Fort Point Channel. Two retail fishing businesses, James Hook and Neptune Lobster and Seafood Company, are located adjacent to the west and east end of the bridge, respectively. On the west side, moving south from the bridge toward Congress Street, the Sheraton Building abuts the channel, followed by over an acre of parking. An electrical substation, Russia Wharf, and the two buildings in the process of being renovated by the Russia Wharf Company border the parking lot's southern end.

The new quarters of the Federal Reserve Bank occupy the entire block bordered by Atlantic and Dorchester Avenues and Congress and Summer Streets. Improved sidewalks along Congress Street provide access to the Congress Street Bridge, the Tea Party Ship, the Museum of Transportation, the Children's Museum, the soon-to-be developed Fiedler Fire Museum, and the Fort Point Channel area. The Congress Street Bridge is not manned and can be opened only in emergencies.

South Station, Stone and Webster Engineering and the U.S. Post Office South Postal Annex fill the area adjacent to the channel below the Summer Street Bridge.

Crossing over to the eastern side of the channel and moving north, buildings form a solid wall along the water's edge between the Summer and Congress Street Bridges. Then, at Congress Street, an open promenade and sitting area on Museum Wharf and behind Victoria Station Restaurant open up the view to the channel.

Behind the museums lie 33 acres of Boston Wharf Company property. Plans for its re-use call for rehabilitation and new construction for a variety of mixed uses; housing, light industry, and offices with the emphasis on housing north of Congress Street. At the northern edge of the Boston Wharf Company property lie the old Penn Central yards proposed for eventual development as office buildings or a trade center by Broderick Development.

Piers 1-4 contain over thirty acres owned by Anthony Athanas. At present, the area is used for Anthony's Pier 4 restaurant, parking and A.C. Cruise, a small tourist/excursion boat company.

#### Waterside Uses

Traveling through the same area by water yields another perspective. Private pleasure boats are moored at Lewis and Commercial Wharves. The bulkhead at the edge of Waterfront Park adjacent to shallow water is bare of boats. Pilot boats and tourist/excursion craft float beside portions of Long Wharf. The Aquarium's research vessel, the Edgerton, docks along the northern flank of Central Wharf. The hovermarine commuter boat from Hingham uses a second, recently constructed, floating dock on this wharf on a temporary basis. The Aquarium's exhibit barge, the Discovery, is permanently moored on the wharf's southern face.

Off India Wharf, below Harbor Towers, extend the slips and moorings of the Boston Harbor Sailing Club. From the southern edge of this wharf down Fort Point Channel to the Summer Street Bridge, the pierheads and bulkheads are in various states of disrepair.

Associated with both the Summer and Congress Street Bridges are a tangle of raised pipes and rotting piers which present hazards to navigation. The bulkhead from this point south appears to be in good condition.

32 On the east side of Fort Point Channel after the Congress Street Bridge, the bulkhead is in fairly good condition. The Museum of Transportation plans repairs and dock construction to display such antique craft as a steam launch, a Herreshoff 12 1/2 Bullseye, and a 1920 livery type wooden canoe.

The bridge tenders still swing the Northern Avenue Bridge open to let large boats in and out of the channel, but they sometimes have difficulty closing it in the hot summer months.

The bulkhead of Piers 1-4 appears to be in good condition.





## Current Issues

### Landside Issues

Public access to many parts of the Downtown/Fort Point Channel is constrained and difficult. Winding streets, dangerous intersections, inadequate lighting and signage, and the Central Artery combine to complicate pedestrian access to the harborfront.

These difficulties do not discourage flocks of people from visiting waterfront attractions. Between June of 1978 and June of 1979, 936,000 people visited the Aquarium. In a similar period, 150,000 visitors toured the Tea Party Ship moored alongside a recycled World War II ammunition barge next to the Congress Street Bridge. On Museum Wharf on Fort Point Channel in South Boston, the Museum of Transportation opened on July 1st of this year and projects a 250,000 annual visitorship. The Children's Museum, located in the same building, expects 500,000 children and parents per year.

Institutions such as these are not the only magnets. On Long Wharf, between June and August of this year, up to 9,000 people boarded the tourist/excursion boats per day to tour the Harbor Islands, travel to Provincetown, or listen to concerts in the evening. Some 120 commuters embark and disembark each day from the Hovermarine to Hingham at Central Wharf. At peak periods over 3,000 passengers per day board commuter and tourist/excursion boats on Rowes Wharf (650 commuter and 2,450 tourist). At Pier 1, up to 250 passengers per day enjoy cruises aboard the Virginia C.

People also come to the waterfront to eat. Before the museums opened at Museum wharf, the Hood Milk Bottle fed approximately 500 people per day. Numerous other restaurants around this portion of the harbor are also flourishing and attracting significant numbers of people.

People bring brown lunch bags or food from neighboring restaurants to the existing public open spaces. At lunch time on any sunny day, Waterfront Park, Central Wharf, Museum Wharf, and the area next to Victoria Station are jammed with people.

Some people come to the waterfront for no other purpose than to stroll and look at the water. There is almost always someone peering through the chain-link fence at the end of Long Wharf or sitting in one of the parking lots along the water's edge staring out at the harbor.

Only the adventurous see the harbor from more than the four vantage points mentioned above. Most people do not witness the spectacular views available because rotting decking and fenced off parking lots deprive them of access to the prime viewing positions. Pedestrian density will increase with the completion of new offices, apartments, excursion boats, hotels, restaurants, and shops. Additional pedestrian access should be planned before this new development takes place. The planning of what will become a major adjunct to Boston's downtown should not omit this exciting opportunity to incorporate an entire pedestrian walkway and open space system as one element in the development infrastructure.

### Waterside Issues

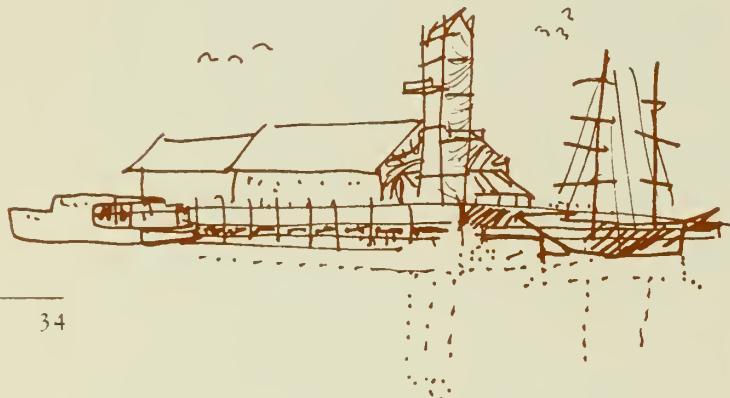
The pedestrian question is complicated by the presence of other uses on the harbor edge and must be viewed in context with waterside functions. Pedestrian access along this edge must be designed so as to not inhibit the operation or threaten the security of the tourist/excursion, commuter, private pleasure, research/scientific, and exhibit/historic boats.

People on land are not the only ones with problems reaching the interface of land and sea. The decaying wharves and random isolated piles projecting out of the water or just below the surface pose substantial hazards to boat owners. Commuter and tourist/excursion boat operators conduct their business despite substandard docking spaces and inadequate landside facilities. Their passengers have few places to sit or seek protection from inclement weather while waiting for their boats.

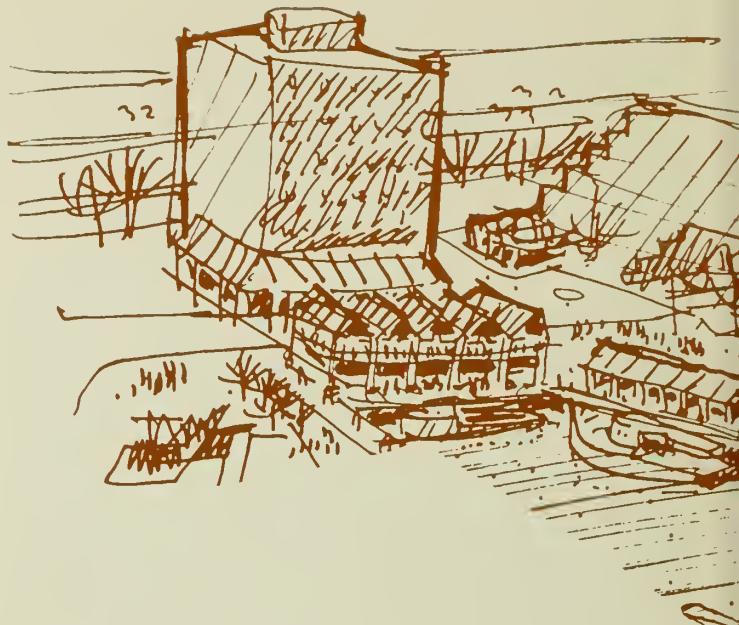
Planning efforts for new developments should address the needs of water-dependent uses. Wharves will have to be repaired; transportation and parking issues will have to be addressed in detail; and navigational and environmental considerations will have to be reviewed. Some marine functions need very little landside space and are able to float most of their facilities on the water. Others require ground level space, but need not occupy upper levels.

When the requirements for different uses are sorted out, their conflicts and compatibilities become clear and design criteria emerge. The integration of water-enhanced and water-dependent uses at certain locations represents an exciting design opportunity. The following section describes some proposals for achieving these objectives and resolving these conflicts in the Downtown/Fort Point Channel Area.

Long Wharf  
Public Landing



34



## The Plan

### Goals, Objectives, and Policies

To assure adequate public (including the handicapped public) access to, and open space along, the water's edge.

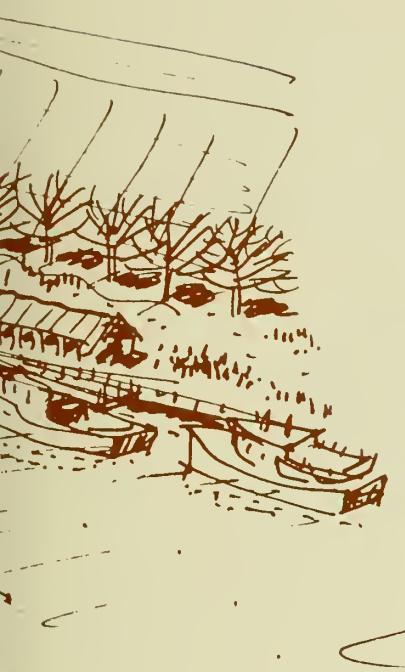
- Provide improved pedestrian access which is safe, convenient, pleasant, clearly identified by day and night, and available to the handicapped from the downtown and residential neighborhoods to the water's edge.
- Extend the parks and walking systems of Boston to include a unified pedestrian way along the water's edge with as much exposure to the water as possible without obstructing the effective operation and security of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses abutting the harbor.

Clarify State Street as a major pedestrian link to the waterfront from downtown.

Clarify Broad Street as a second major pedestrian link to the waterfront.

Clarify India, Summer, and Congress Streets as minor pedestrian links to the waterfront.

*Terminal Facility  
between Long and  
Central Wharves*



Encourage the establishment of indoor and outdoor passenger waiting areas which facilitate the efficient and comfortable loading and unloading of passengers in all seasons.

Provide clearly marked pedestrian access to existing public land and water transportation.

Encourage the design of workable service and support functions such as truck loading zones, bus layover areas, auto/taxi/bus drop-off areas, employee parking, administrative offices, ticketing facilities, and food and drink preparation.

Improve and expand docking space through the repair of existing bulkheads and pierheads or through the introduction of floating docks, dolphins and reinforcement of pier corners and wharf accessories where necessary.

Improve public access by water to such coastal, cultural, historic, and recreational facilities as the Harbor Islands State Park, the U.S.S. Constitution Historic Site, and the Kennedy Library. Provide the public with information on the location of departure points.

Encourage flexible docking systems with levels to accommodate boats of different sizes including gangway ramps.

- Improve mooring space for private craft.

Encourage the establishment of secure boat basin facilities in Fort Point Channel.

Encourage the development of a public landing(s) for boats visiting the downtown waterfront in the vicinity of Long Wharf and Waterfront Park.

To create opportunities for sound, higher-density development that will be compatible with other waterfront uses.

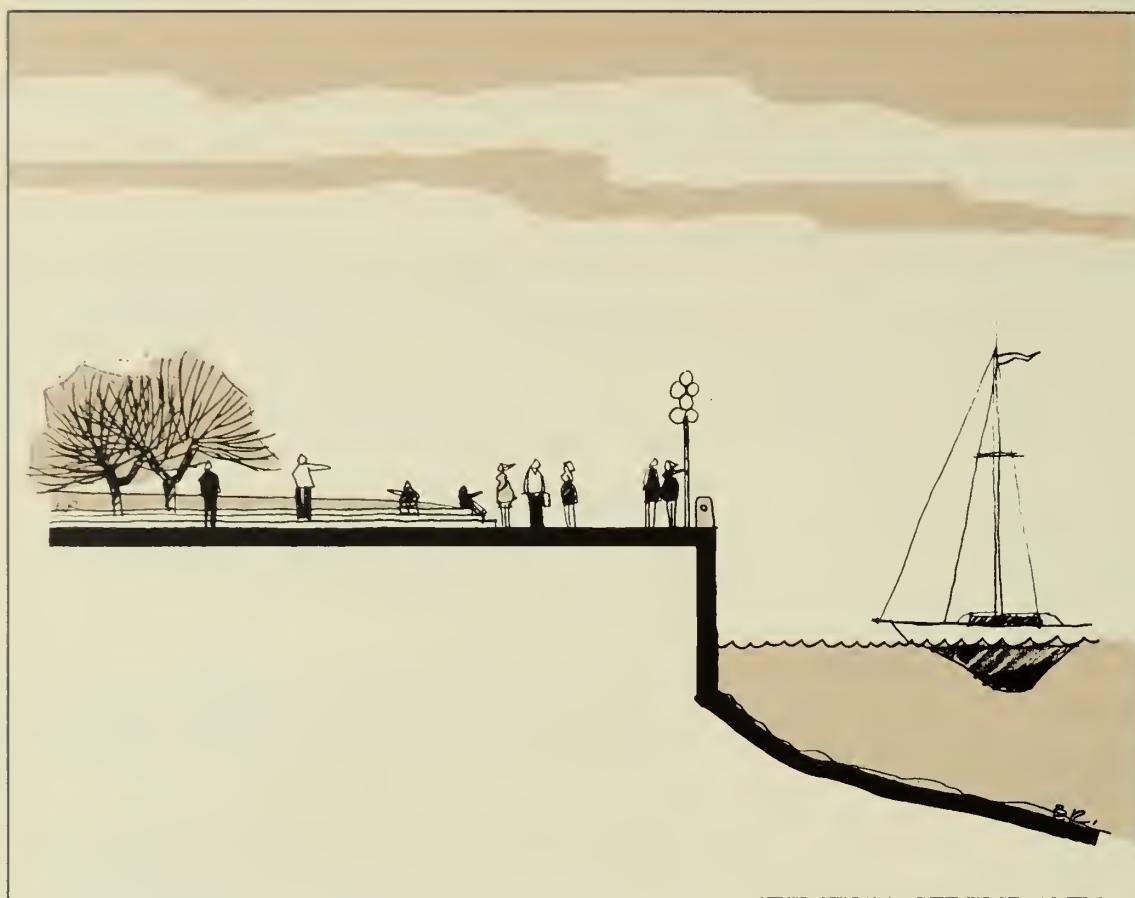
- Encourage a mix of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses in the downtown waterfront with priority given to water-dependent uses and public access on the ground level along the water's edge.
- Encourage developers constructing new facilities or renovating existing buildings for water-enhanced uses to provide public access to the water's edge and to lease space to water-dependent uses which are compatible with their projected uses in one or more of the following ways:

Improve Atlantic Avenue as the link between walks from the downtown and walks to and along the water's edge, as the site for bus stops, and as a route to South and Aquarium MBTA Stations. Remove the parking lane on the harbor side of Atlantic Avenue and devote the recaptured space to improved signage, lights, street furniture, and planting.

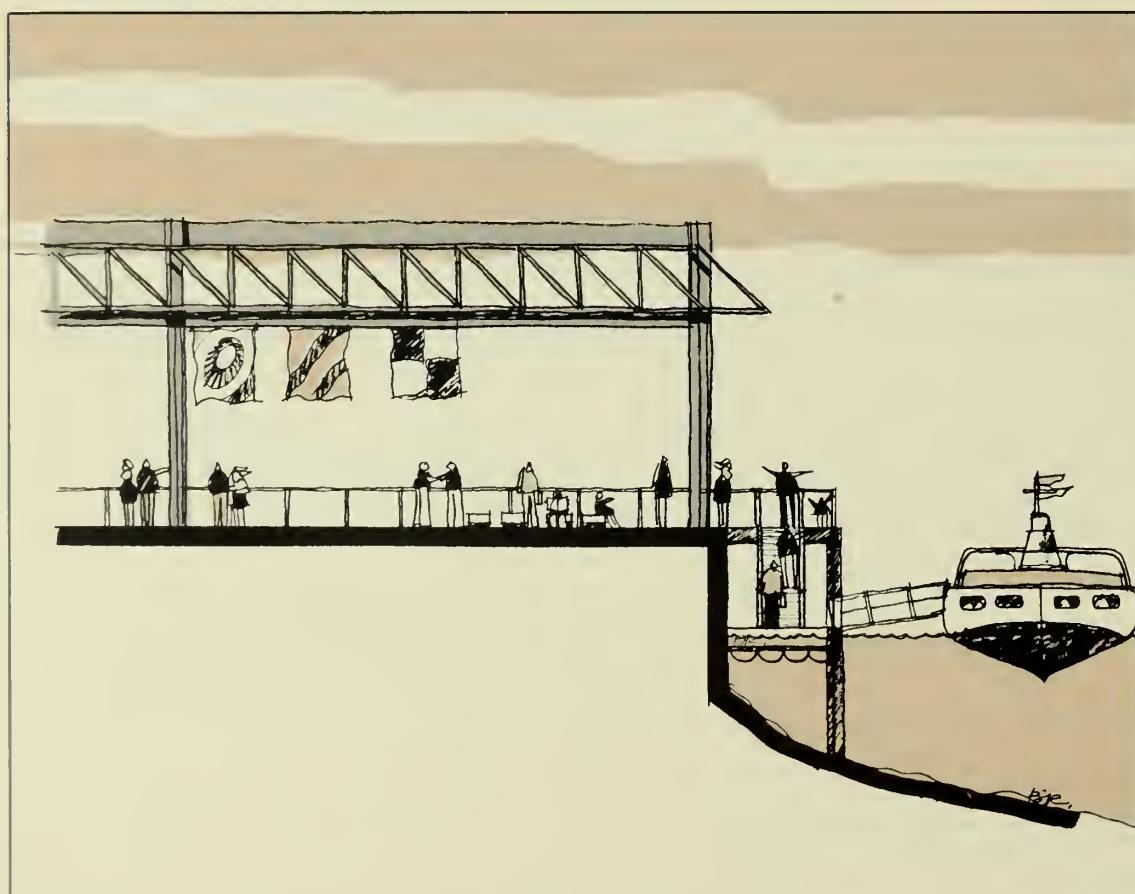
- Improve pedestrian access along the water's edge by encouraging public and private entities to contribute to a comprehensive public access system as part of their development or renovation plans.
- Consider changes in elevation of pedestrian access along the water's edge, when such changes are necessary to the successful function of a water-dependent or water-enhanced use.
- Incorporate bicycle racks into the public access system.

To better accommodate boating uses, to anticipate their growth and to provide an orderly program for their expansion, considering both waterside and landside space and functional needs.

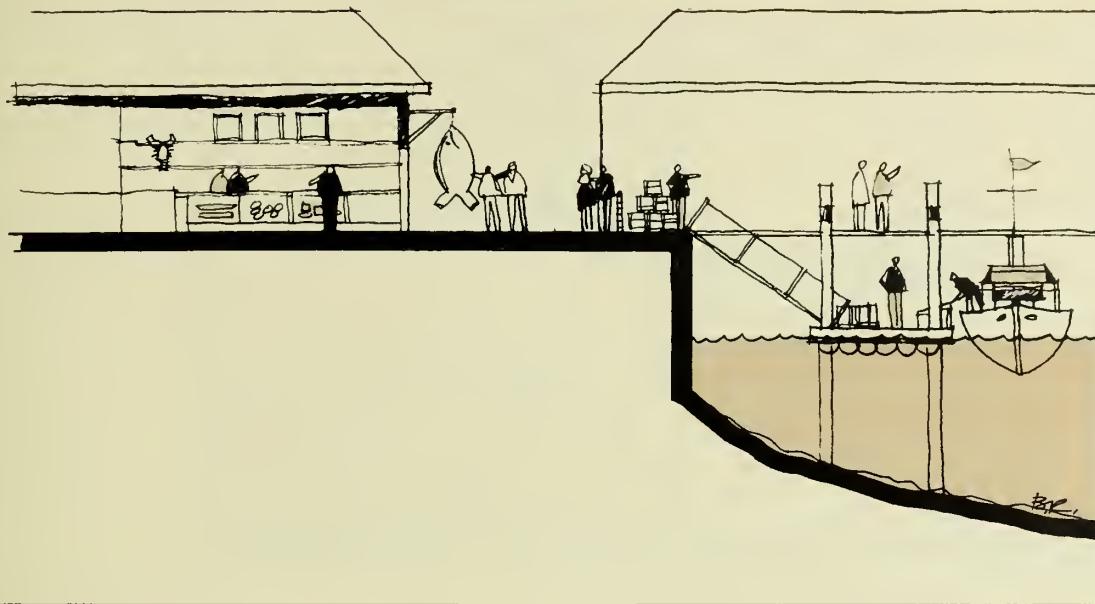
- Better accommodate boating and tourist excursion operations at both Long and Rowes-Fosters Wharves.



Locate the public way along the water's edge.



Locate the public way along the water's edge except when passengers are embarking or disembarking from commuter or tourist excursion boats. Provide a loop or extra width for the use of pedestrians while the public way along the water's edge is occupied by passengers.

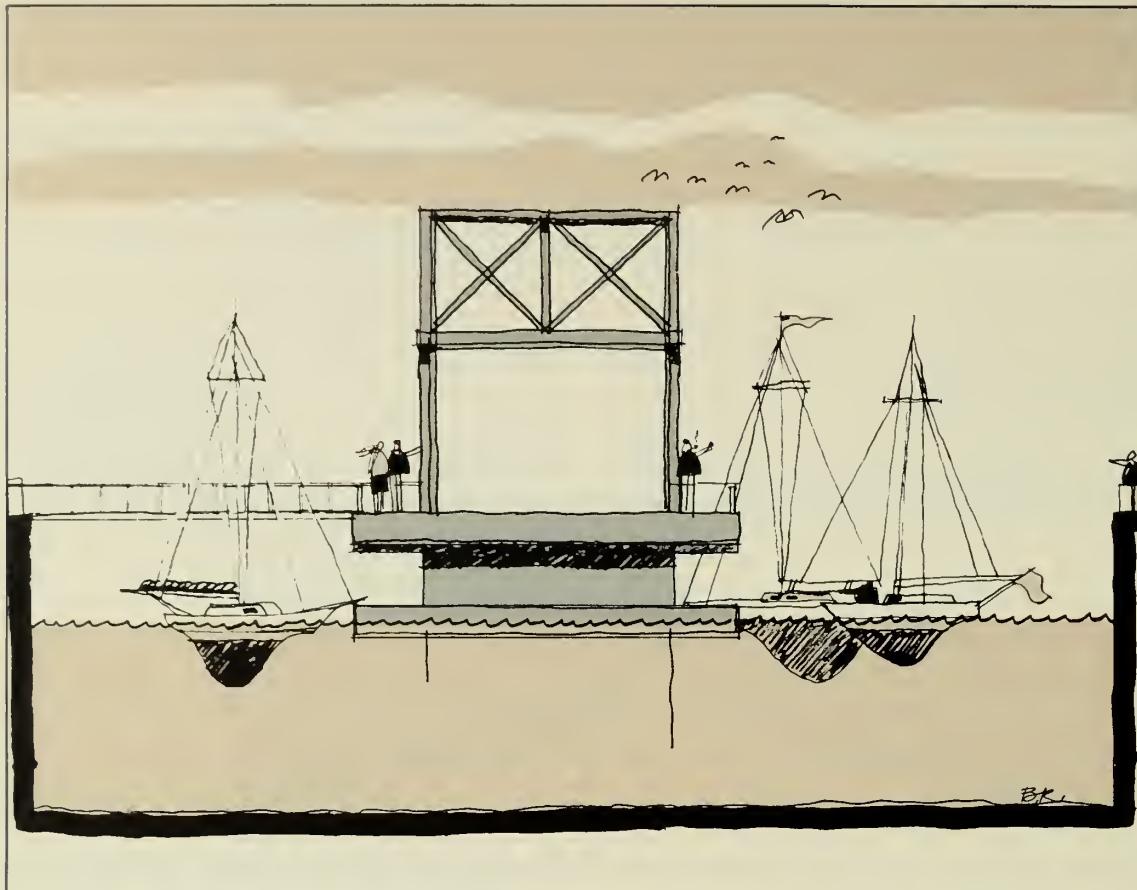


Loop the public way around an intersecting water-dependent use such as lobster trap storage area.

37

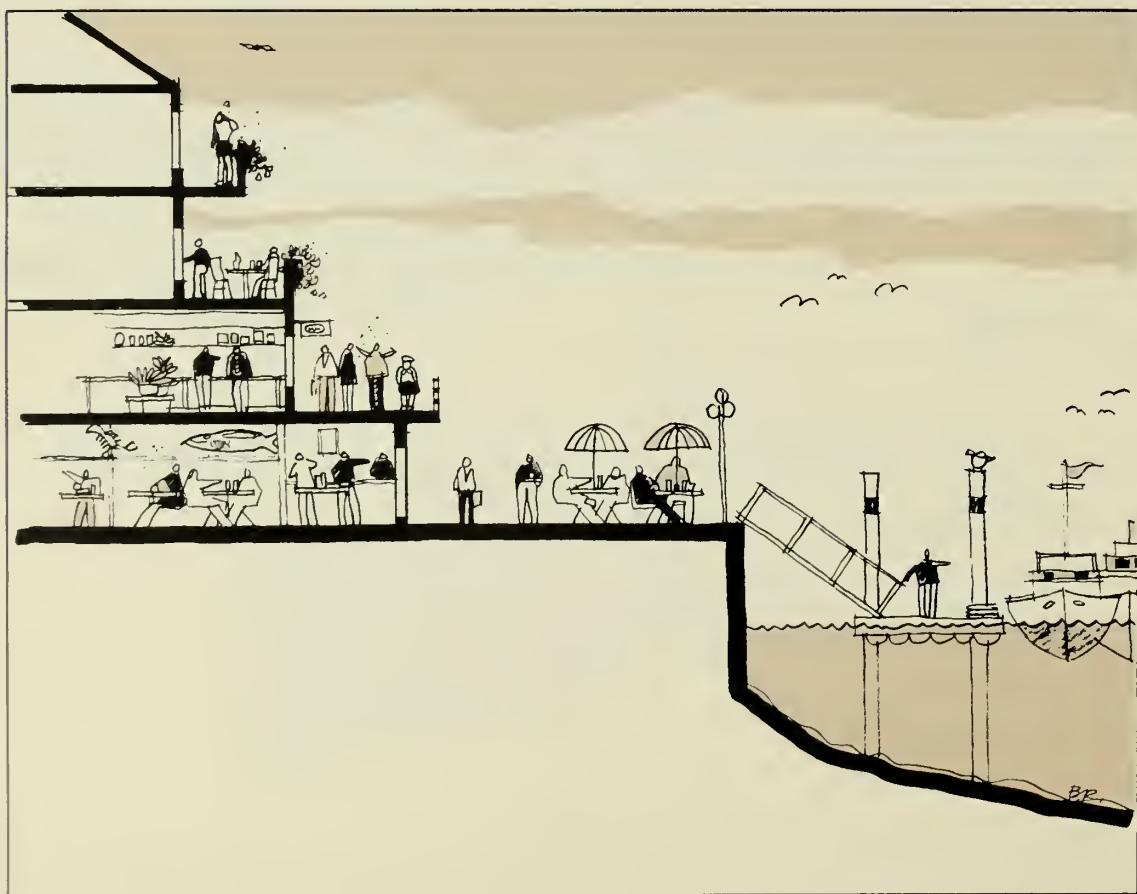


Separate the public way from the water's edge to provide security for an adjacent water-dependent use such as a private pleasure boat basin.

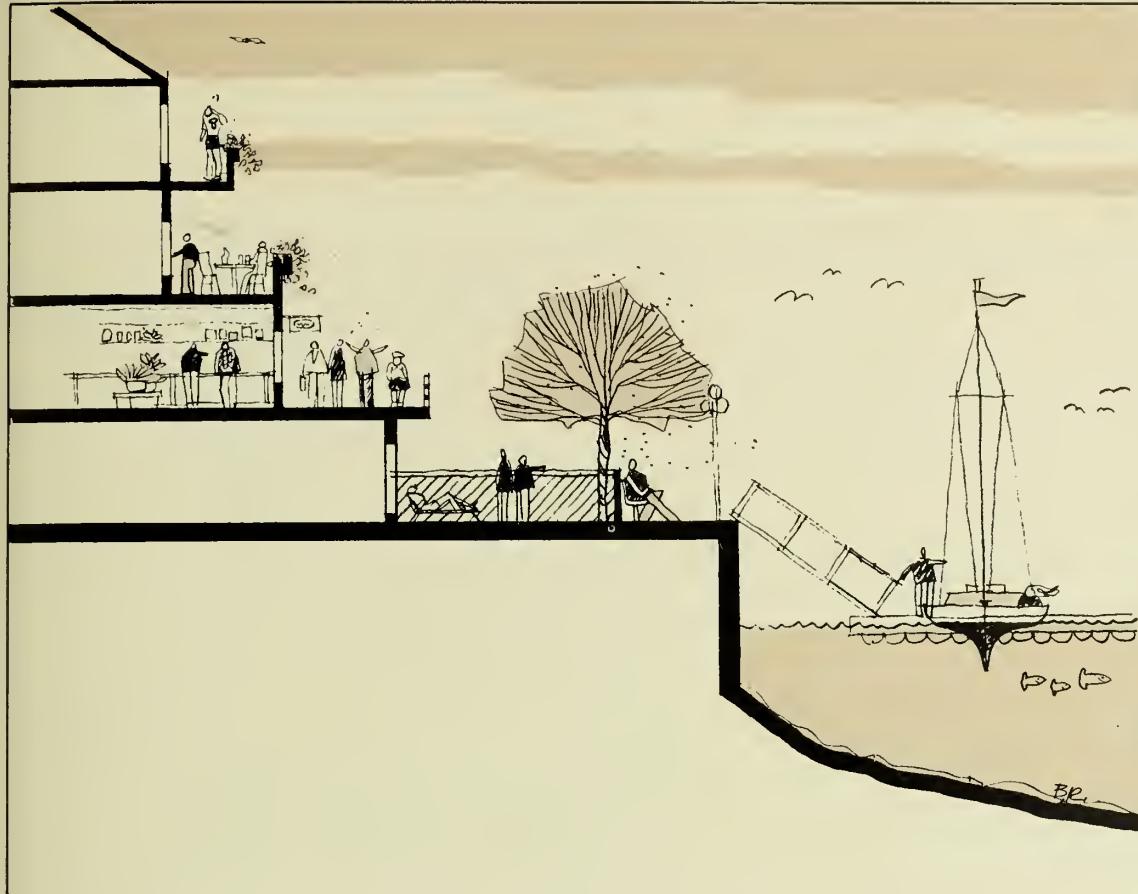


Locate the public way along the water's edge. Use water to separate the public from and provide security for an adjacent water-dependent use.

38



Locate the public way on a second level over a water-enhanced use such as a restaurant or cafe.



Locate the public way on a second level over water-enhanced use such as apartments and adjacent to retail space.

- Encourage the incorporation of visual concerns into the early stages of the planning and design of all facilities in the downtown waterfront.
- Review developments proposed near designated or registered historic districts or sites to ensure their compatibility with the historic character of the area.

To improve linkages between the MBTA and commuter/ tourist/excursion boats.

To preserve and enhance environmental and navigational conditions in the harbor.

- Design commuter and tourist/excursion facilities, boat basins and other water-dependent uses to minimize disruption of harbor flushing or restriction of the tidal prism, and excavation or filling in shallow waters.

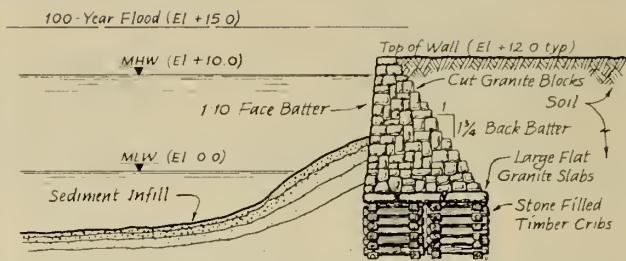
Carry out dredging strategically to improve navigation, as needed, taking care to avoid undermining existing bulkheads that are to remain.

Retain original "gravity" bulkheads wherever possible, taking care not to add surcharge loads that would reduce their structural stability, to protect them from heavy machinery and to limit excavation in their immediate vicinity.

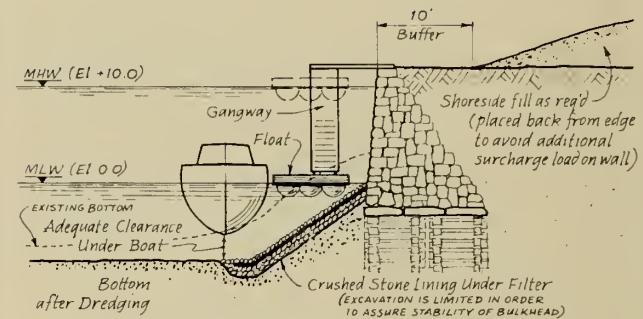
- Ensure that commuter and tourist/excursion facilities, boat basins, and other water-dependent uses are equipped for the proper handling of boat and site-generated sewerage, litter, and refuse.
- Encourage, where possible, multiple use docks common to several property interests.
- Require removal of all unused piers and similar structures in a state of disrepair.
- Permit only jetties, groins, or breakwaters that do not interfere with public access, nor unduly disturb the aquatic ecosystem.
- Preload or use other special techniques to avoid settlement of public access and open space areas due to poor soil conditions.

To assure that contemporary design and new public spaces reflect the waterfront's historic past.

To propose a public strategy for dealing with harbor issues.



**Typical Granite "Gravity" Bulkhead**



**Channel Dredging and Lining**  
(Integrity of Original Bulkhead is maintained)

## Specific Proposals

The following sections describe how these objectives can be applied to specific sites in the Waterfront-Fort Point Channel Area.

### Long Wharf

Long Wharf, built between 1711 and 1715 as an extension of King Street, which is now known as State Street, was once Boston's principal pier. Today, the opportunity exists for this wharf to regain its position of primacy in the City's new waterfront.

Long Wharf should be developed for multiple use as public open space, the terminus of the Walk-to-the-Sea, the entrance to the Harbor Islands State Park, the introduction to Boston for visitors sailing or motoring into the harbor, and the focus of a highly functional, interconnected land and water transportation system.

The large open space at the end of Long Wharf should convey to visitors the noteworthy events in Long Wharf's rich history. General Howe's departures for Nova Scotia and the consequent end of the British presence in the city in 1776, the position of the Customs House in maritime trade, and the United Fruit Company's tenure from 1899-1958 are some of the subjects which could be incorporated into an exciting exhibit.

The following recommendations suggest a direction for the renovation and redevelopment of Long Wharf.

### Public Access and Open Space

Use sidewalk improvements, lighting and signage to clarify how the Walk-to-the-Sea, Waterfront Park, new Long Wharf hotel, and the northern edge of Long Wharf connect with each other.

Use sidewalk improvements, lighting and signage to clarify how State Street connects the Aquarium, MBTA station, the southern edge of Long Wharf, the commuter/tourist/excursion boats berthed in the adjacent water, and the associated dockside pavilions.

Provide pedestrian paths to and around the water's edge in recognition of the historic 30-foot wide public way established in 1709 by Boston's selectmen and the builders of the wharf "for use forever" by the public.

Develop two public open spaces: one between the proposed hotel, the Chart House, and the proposed public landing and the other at the terminus of the "Walk-to-the-Sea."

Program the first open space as a recreation area for the public landing, the front yard at the Chart House and the proposed hotel, and an outdoor eating area.

Program the second open space as the Long Wharf Historic Park with information about its history.

### Water-dependent Uses

Develop a public landing area for visiting pleasure craft at the terminus of the Walk-to-the-Sea and short-term mooring space in the area designated on the plan.

Add a covered landside accommodation for the public landing, the Long Wharf Historic Park, and the Harbor Islands State Park. Staff and signage in this structure will orient incoming yachtsmen, island visitors, and wharf tourists.

Provide floating docks adjacent to the portion of the wharf's periphery as illustrated in the plan for the use of pilot boats, visiting pleasure craft, water taxis, commuter boats, and tourist excursion boats.

Construct sheltered sitting pavilions for the use of waiting boat passengers and the general public parallel to the floating docks.

Provide a tower for the use of the Harbor Master and for harbor viewing by the public.

*Proposed Changes  
Long, Central and  
India Wharves*



*Development  
Opportunities  
Rowes Fosters Wharves*



*Boat Basin for Private  
Pleasure Boats  
Fort Point Channel*



## Block Between Long and Central Wharves

The block between Long and Central Wharves occupies a pivotal position between Waterfront Park, the existing and proposed activities on Long Wharf, and the Aquarium. Large numbers of people walk through there on their way between these harbor attractions. As new development efforts come to fruition, the number of pedestrians will increase.

The New England Telephone and Telegraph building's central location between the wharves offers an opportunity as the landside accommodation for the commuter/tourist/excursion boats operators. Over 800 linear feet of berthing space on the southern edge of Long Wharf and 600 feet of berthing space on the northern flank of Central Wharf offer the kind of waterside configuration necessary to the future operation of these boats.

The following recommendations suggest methods of taking advantage of the opportunities that exist in this area.

## Public Access and Open Space

Use lighting to clarify the connection between State Street, the New England and Telegraph building, and the proposed commuter/tourist/excursion boat facilities.

## Water-Dependent Uses

Explore utilizing a portion of the first floor of the telephone building as a waiting area for boat passengers and as administrative offices for boat operators.

Extend the bulkhead between these wharves so that it lines up with the bulkhead running between Central and India Wharves.

Construct an outdoor covered waiting area for passengers over the new land created behind this extension.

Reinforce the functional relationships between the first floor of the telephone building and the covered waiting area by extending the sidewalk in front of the telephone building, and realigning the street between the two facilities and using a special kind of paving for this portion of the street.

## India Wharf

(Area encompassing the Harbor Towers Parking Garage and Harbor Towers).

Improved public access to and through this area would help connect it to the downtown and improve pedestrian circulation up and down the water's edge. It would reduce the walking distance and enhance the walk to the Aquarium MBTA Station for the future residents of the

apartment complex proposed for Rowes-Fosters Wharves.

The following recommendations suggest ways of treating this area:

Use lighting to clarify the connection between Milk Street and Central Wharf.

Develop a park between Harbor Towers and Rowes Wharf.

Support the continuation of private pleasure boating activities in the water of this area with linkage to the necessary landside support.

## Rowes-Fosters Wharves—Appraisers Building

Rowes-Fosters Wharves represent a major development opportunity for the city. By capitalizing on their location on Boston Harbor and encouraging a plan which provides for the integration of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses, the City will take the lead in innovative and sound harbor development.

The following recommendations suggest methods of realizing these opportunities.

## Public Access and Open Space

Use lighting and signage to clarify how Broad Street and the downtown connects the financial district and Rowes-Fosters Wharves connect to each other.

Provide a visual terminus for the Broad Street linkage to the sea with an open space adjacent to the former location of the historic ferry slip.

Provide finger paths to the water's edge along the northern edge of A.P. Wilcox building and the southern edge of the Appraiser's Building.

Provide public access along the water's edge along reconstructed piers in front of the A.P. Wilcox Warehouse and the Appraiser's Building.

Develop a mini-park between India and Rowes Wharves to continue the open space system forming the harbor walk, to provide an amenity for the proposed residences adjacent to it, and to provide an outdoor eating area for the adjacent business community and the general public.

Extend pedestrian access along the water's edge.

## Water-enhanced and Water-dependent Uses

Create a parcel for a private mid-rise residential development on Rowes Wharf.

Allocate a portion of the ground level to water-dependent uses related to the small private pleasure boat basin associated with the mini-park described above.

Orient the development to provide views from Atlantic Avenue to the harbor.

Require structured parking.

Create a mixed-use development opportunity on Fosters Wharf which includes a parcel for a private mid-rise residential development and structured parking on the northern half and a parcel for the landside accommodation for the commuter/tourist/excursion boats and water taxis.

Allocate space on the ground floor of the residential development for the support functions of the boat operations.

Incorporate structured parking and a rooftop restaurant/overlook above the boat passenger facilities.

Design the passenger waiting area to permit views from Atlantic Avenue to the harbor through the structure.

Provide a covered outdoor waiting space which connects the boats' berthing space with the indoor waiting space and facilitates embarkation/disembarkation.

Encourage the development of a small private pleasure boat basin off the mini-park described above.

## Fort Point Channel

Fort Point Channel, neglected and ignored for many years, has recently received increased attention.

As sites along the banks become sites for dramatic new buildings such as the Federal Reserve Bank and Stone and Websters Engineering Corporation, as thousands of visitors flock across its bridges to the recently opened Transportation and Children's Museums, and as new residential, office, and commercial developments are contemplated, planning for its future becomes increasingly important.

The channel and vicinity offer considerable opportunities for new walkways, parks with dramatic views, and lively boat basins. The following recommendations suggest ways of developing this area's potential.

## Public Access and Open Space

Use lighting and signage to clarify how Oliver Street connects the Financial District, Fort Hill Square, and the proposed Northern Avenue Bridge to each other. Clarify and improve its connection with the pedestrian overpass over the Central Artery.

Provide a park and pedestrian access to the existing Northern Avenue Bridge, which would be permanently oriented parallel to the channel banks.

Provide pedestrian access along both sides of the proposed Northern Avenue Bridge.

Provide finger paths along the southern edge of the Sheraton Building to Fort Point Channel and the proposed park.

Provide a park which covers an area from the edge of the Sheraton Building to Congress Street for sitting, eating lunch, and viewing the Tea Party Ship Beaver, the water, the antique boats in front of the Museum of Transportation and the Children's Museum.

Use signage to clarify how Congress Street connects the downtown to the Fort Point Channel area.

Use signage to clarify the connection between South Station, Fort Point Channel, and the harbor walk pedestrian system.

Provide public access along the water's edge on both sides of Fort Point Channel and out to Anthony's Pier 4.

Incorporate the open space on Museum Wharf into the harbor walk pedestrian access system.

Provide a park along the water's edge between the proposed and existing Northern Avenue Bridge extending onto Pier 1.

Improve the sidewalk on Northern Avenue for pedestrian use.

Promote dinghy rental and sailing south of the Summer Street Bridge.

## Water-dependent Uses

- Construct a tethered, floating breakwater (TFB) in Fort Point Channel at its opening to help still wind and ship generated waves without interfering with natural harbor flushing or impeding the view.
- Establish a major boat basin for sailing and motor, private pleasure boats on the protected waters of Fort Point Channel by extending floats off the base of the permanently turned Northern Avenue Bridge and by developing the first level as a secure landside accommodation for the boat basin.

- Establish a second boat basin for small motorcraft with access off the Summer Street Bridge in the southwestern waters of Fort Point Channel.
- Investigate the function of exposed conduits, pipes, and structures in Fort Point Channel and remove all those which are presently unnecessary.

Fort Point Channel, 1903  
(Courtesy of The  
Museum of Transportation)

45



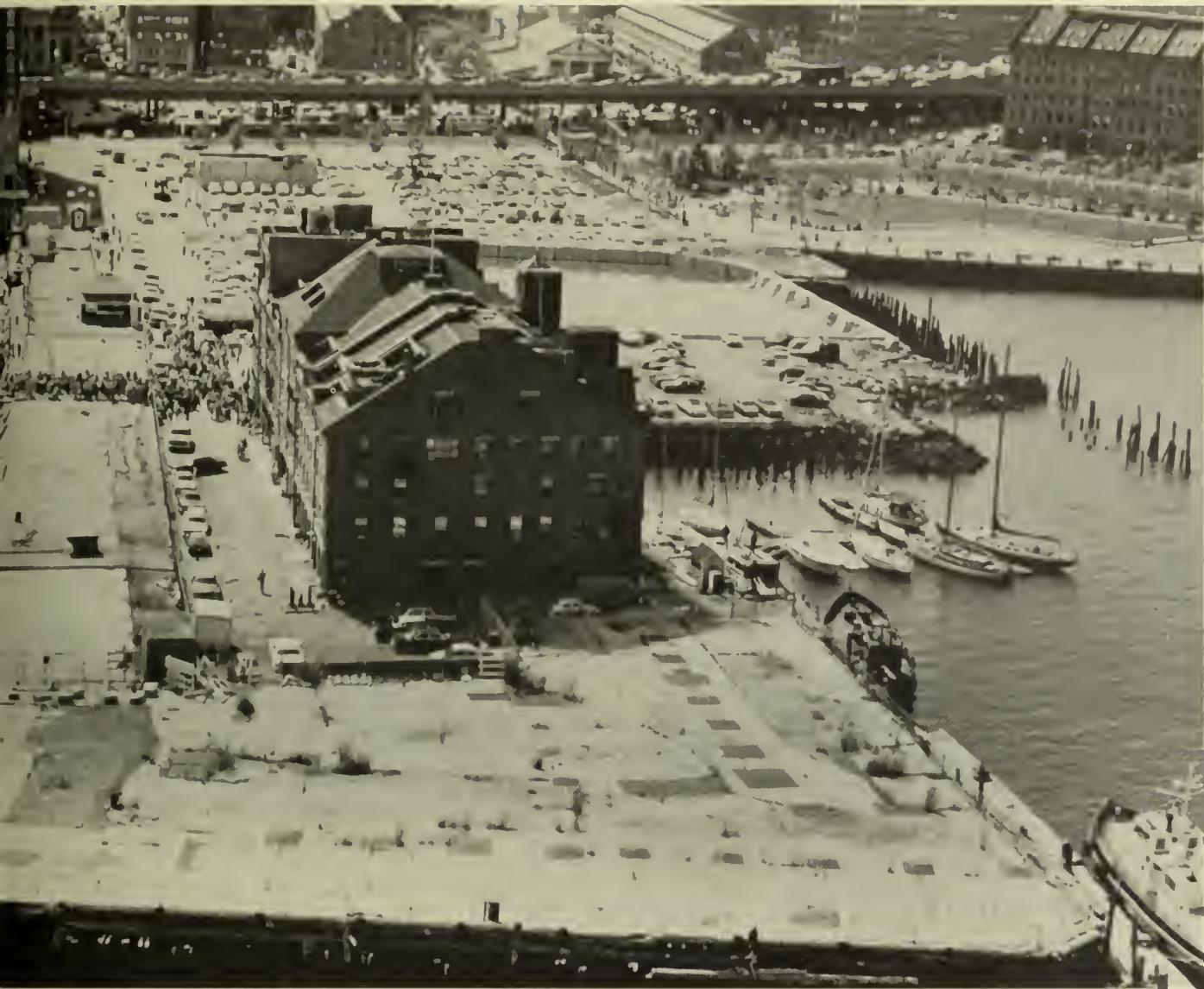
## Implementation



46 Implementation of plans for the protection, rehabilitation and development of waterfront areas is difficult because of several restraints including the following:

**The large number of public decision makers involved from all three levels of government.**

The state owns all land under water, the federal Government through the Corp of Army Engineers and the Coast Guard controls anything that goes into or floats on top of water. The local conservation commission also has a say on new fill, piles or pollution. In Boston, the problem is further complicated by the presence of Logan Airport because the Federal Aeronautical Administration imposes restrictions on the height of developments in the immediate vicinity of the airport.



### **The added costs of waterfront development.**

Any type of construction along the water, whether it be a park or a structure, is more expensive than it would be elsewhere. Boston's 13 foot tides expose large sections of piers and seawalls to wetting and drying that promote decay and deterioration. The tidal surge seeks to extract the land piled up behind every crack in the seawall. Construction workers employed over, or worse, under the water demand and get special premiums for hazardous duty.

### **Legal problems.**

The age of Boston's waterfront, the legal problems that have resulted over the years from the creation of new land by filling the sea floor, and other legal conflicts over the boundary of the land and water make the legal problems of waterfront development especially challenging.



## Development Process

48 To overcome these and other problems that impede development and conservation of the waterfront, a systematic program to support the implementation of plans must be developed.

Several successful alternative models are available for Boston to choose from. Baltimore developed a public-private development entity to fund and manage redevelopment of a harbor many times more deteriorated than any portion of Boston Harbor. The inclusion of a large mixed income housing development in the overall planning enabled the development to receive large scale support from HUD.

New York City took the approach of declaring large sections of the shoreline as a "Gateway National Park," but only after the National Park Service agreed to a participatory planning process that would allow the City and neighborhood residents to have a voice in its design and operation.

Perhaps best known is San Francisco's Bay Conservation and Development Commission. This organization, created in response to large scale filling of the bay for new residential development, controls development around San Francisco Bay by permitting filling only for water-related uses that conform to a specific plan.

The San Francisco experience served as a model for the committees proposed in both the Boston Harbor Associ-

ates state legislation and the Kennedy-Moakley Federal Boston Harbor Recreation Area bill. Although it has worked well in San Francisco, this concept has had a more difficult time being accepted in Boston because of the long tradition of home rule here and because valuable shorefront land is very important to Massachusetts cities and towns which are highly dependent on income from property taxes. This dependence increases the resistance to regional uses such as port facilities and large public beaches which pay no taxes and place large demands on local roads and service systems. Participants in the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Planning process were reminded again and again of the fear local communities have of losing control over the use of their land to a higher level of government.

Boston even has its own model, the conversion of the Charlestown Navy Yard from an abandoned obsolete ship repair facility to an attractive community with housing, jobs, open space, stores, and public facilities. Its design will provide for a high level of historic preservation, the maximum amount of public access to and along the waterfront, and new parks for the existing Charlestown community and the new residents of the shipyard. Boat service will connect the yard to other points in the harbor.

This conversion model contains the following components: (1) public investment in plan development and evaluation of investment needs and returns and of potential returns; (2) a professional evaluation of environmental consequences of alternative development proposals; and (3) an implementation program that combines the public grants from state and federal agencies, the expertise and financial resources of a large scale private developer, and the involvement of a local economic development corporation.

Despite these conflicts and problems, various conflicts have been resolved over the last decade and important developments such as the Moran Terminal and Boston's Waterfront Park have been completed.



waterfront suggests physical design techniques which can reduce conflicts among uses.

Because government has traditionally been involved in the development of harbors (Boston built its first public pier in 1631), a great deal of land abutting the water is owned or otherwise controlled by a public entity. In many areas of Boston where port facilities exist, restrictive "W" waterfront zoning provides the local zoning boards with considerable say in approving most new development proposals. Finally, the recently enacted Coastal Zone Management Plan is supposed to provide a coordinated set of state policies and regulations for control of waterfront land when the new development would require state approval or financial support.

The history of complaints about the management of Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners (1877), is almost as old as the city itself. Early solutions such as the Port of Boston Commission (1953), and later the Massachusetts Port Authority (1956), concentrated their attention on problems related to the maritime commerce. More recently, public and private groups alike have seen the management problem as a much broader one relating to conflicting uses of the limited land and water area that make up Boston Harbor.

On the water, conflicts between cargo ships and pleasure craft remain largely unresolved, to the detriment of both. On land, the conflict between alternative uses have left valuable and scarce waterfront land lying fallow, through lack of ability to reach decisions that will satisfy both the owners and the various government regulatory and funding agencies. In previous decades, conflicts over land use were resolved by simply adding to the available land supply by filling in low lying areas. Increased awareness of the problems resulting from indiscriminate filling and the resulting legislation protecting the waters have essentially eliminated the possibility of made land.

This three part effort with public, private and neighborhood actors, each taking on the most appropriate function, reflects Boston's strong neighborhood orientation and is a useful way of structuring a planning and development process.

Boston need not restrict itself to this one strategy. The Charlestown strategy with the City's planning and development agency (the BRA) and its economic development agency (EDIC) working with major businesses and business leaders, and with neighborhood development groups, is suitable for some of the harborfront communities.

Boston also has had very favorable experience with the National Park Service which maintains six historic sites in Boston. In addition, the legislation creating the six-site Boston National Historic Park contains provision for expansion of the park service's responsibilities to include other important areas of Boston. As the history of Boston Harbor described elsewhere in this report shows, many of these historic sites are on or adjacent to Boston Harbor.

## Management and Legislation

Demand for land abutting Boston Harbor is strong today and can be expected to remain so for the foreseeable future. Some of this demand comes from traditional port uses (although many of these have taken on a new form and new location requirements due to changes in technology). Other demands come from uses that are relatively new to the waterfront such as housing, parks, hotels, and local commuter boats. Such diversity insures that the market will remain strong despite short-term variations in its various components.

In addition to direct conflicts for the same piece of land, the uses now interested in waterfront locations have external factors that often result in real or feared conflicts between adjoining or even nearby uses. An active port with regular ship traffic provides an attractive backdrop for residential and other people-oriented uses, but the port facilities themselves are often noisy and unattractive to their neighbors. They are major generators of truck traffic and, for security reasons, must be fenced and lighted throughout the night. These conflicts exist in the water as well as on land. Small boat owners and marinas suffer from the wakes of large ships, especially in Boston's narrow Inner Harbor. Likewise, the captains and pilots of the commercial vessels are plagued by the large number of smaller pleasure vessels.

An effective harbor planning and management program could probably provide some relief from these problems. The section of this study dealing with the downtown

It is therefore proposed that work begin to define and develop a program for a new Boston Harbor Historic Site that would extend from the Constitution Wharf in the North End where Old Ironsides was constructed to Nooks Hill in the Fort Point Channel area of South Boston from which George Washington's cannon reminded the British that they had overstayed their welcome in Boston and it was time to move on. Once the groundwork has been prepared, the Boston Harbor Historic Site can be submitted as an amendment to the original legislation.

regional and "development" vs. "conservation" interests that currently split over most proposals relating to the future of Boston Harbor. The process will be made more difficult by the large size of the commission (26 members) and the large number of representatives appointed by the Governor or one of his appointees (11).

The second major bill dealing with Boston Harbor has been submitted to the United States Congress by Senator Kennedy and Congressman Moakley. While titled the "Boston Harbor National Recreation Area Bill," this act lists as its purpose "to assist local governments to administer sound management policies regulating and guiding development in the Boston Harbor area and on the Boston Harbor Islands." Like the TBHA bill, this legislation calls for the creation of a commission (up to 27 members) of which 11 would represent the Governor or state agencies or authorities. The commission would have one year to develop a plan for the provision of recreation facilities and the protection of historically and environmentally important areas and the provision of water access to these areas.

Unlike the state bill, this federal legislation calls for considerable support for the effort, \$20,000,000, to be provided to state and local governments for implementation of the plan after its approval by the Secretary of the Interior, and \$200,000 a year to support the work of the commission.

## Current Legislative Proposals

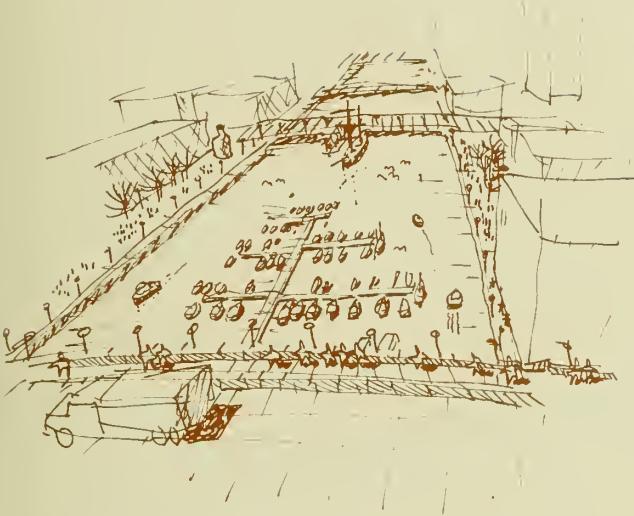
50 The Boston Harbor Associates (TBHA), a private non-profit citizen group concerned with harbor issues, wrote and had submitted to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1979, Senate Bill 2006, which would create a special commission to prepare a development program for Boston Harbor. The commission's program is to deal with the extent and use of public lands, provision of public access to the waterfront, balancing local and regional issues in land use questions, protection of communities from disruption by development, review of the management roles of the various state and municipal agencies with jurisdiction over the harbor, and examination of the effectiveness of the Coastal Zone Management Program in improving the management of the harbor.

This legislation is similar to previous bills filed on behalf of Boston Harbor Associates over the last several years. If approved, the commission will have appointees of state and local governments and representatives of the legislature and the state agencies most directly concerned. The commission is projected to have a two year lifetime and will be funded by state and private sources and the federal Sea Grant Program through MIT. It is expected that the MIT program would provide some staffing, but the commission could have its own director and some staff.

While such an effort will provide a valuable resource to define and investigate some of the many problems faced by the harbor and the port, the proposed commission will be faced with the same problems of local versus



*Boat Basin for Small Motorcraft, Fort Point Channel*



## Funding Strategies

Boston's successful waterfront development programs have used a variety of funding sources to help cover the high costs of acquiring, restoring, and developing land in Boston Harbor. In Charlestown, new park and open space areas have been created with the assistance of the Army Corps of Engineers, Metropolitan District Commission, Economic Development Administration, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS), while some of the costs of planning were funded by the Department of Defense and necessary transportation improvements will be paid for by the Department of Transportation's Urban System Program. These public funds are supplemented by local and state funding, and by private investment.

The number and variety of funding programs and the high level of federal government interest in the development of urban waterfronts are evidenced by the recent creation of an interagency Urban Waterfront Action Group. This group is made up of ten federal agencies and meets bi-weekly to assist local efforts requiring joint funding. It will also evaluate and propose modifications to existing federal programs impacting urban waterfront development. The ten agencies are: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Housing & Urban Development, Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, Economic Development Administration, Maritime Administration, Office of Coastal Zone Management, Federal Insurance Administration, and the National Park Service. The

National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors are also participating.

Within the Downtown/Fort Point Channel area, there exist many opportunities to utilize a variety of funding sources. Tentative agreement has already been reached with the state to fund Phase One of the Long Wharf Park using Heritage Conservation and Recreation funds and a portion of Boston's Community Development Revenue Sharing money. Cost of the first phase, which will include restoration of piling and deck area on the eastern tip of the pier, is \$1.7 million.

In addition, the City will be securing state and federal transportation money to cover costs of the proposed commuter and tourist boat terminals and any necessary improvements in access.

In other areas, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program can be used to cover site preparation and infrastructure improvement costs for areas where large amounts of private investment are expected in return for public funding of these necessary front end costs. A City policy recently announced by Mayor White will require these grants be repaid to the City over the life of the project to provide an ongoing pool of money to support development in Boston's neighborhoods.

The Urban Mass Transit Authority's (UMTA) Urban Initiatives Program provides assistance similar to UDAG in support of developments around transportation centers. The presence of a commuter boat terminal at Rowes Wharf may make that area eligible for assistance under this program which has already provided Boston over \$4 million.

In addition to the proposal for adding a Boston Harbor Historic Site to the existing National Park described elsewhere in this report, federal HCRS and State Heritage Park funds can be used for the proposed open space network linking major harborside attractions. These funds will be supplemented by support to be sought from local land and business owners as the park system will be expected to increase the activity level of the area and near-by business.

The Fort Point Channel boat basin could be aided by the use of historic preservation funds for renovation of the old Northern Avenue bridge (nominated for inclusion on the Federal Register of Historic Places) as its center. Coastal Energy Impacts loans may be available to reduce the cost of borrowing the money for the necessary infrastructure.

Finally, passage and funding of the Kennedy-Moakley bill will make Boston eligible for a portion of the \$20 million that legislation proposes to provide state and local governments to implement the plan for Boston Harbor.

## 52 Acknowledgements

The Boston Redevelopment Authority has initiated this planning study for Boston Harbor. It is only a first step in beginning to articulate the needs, goals, ideas for the harbor and in articulating the various public and private actors who must assume their respective responsibilities in continuing this effort and in achieving the recommendations set forth herein.

This has been a public planning process and one in which numerous groups and individuals with interests in the future of Boston Harbor have participated in a series of public workshops and informal discussions. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all who have participated by offering their ideas, criticisms, and insights. We trust that this mutually beneficial dialogue will continue.

Assisting the Boston Redevelopment Authority with this effort was Sasaki Associates, Inc. of Watertown, Massachusetts: Stuart O. Dawson, Principal/Project Director; Maurice Freedman, Principal; W. Gerald Venable, Project Manager; Nina Brown, Project Planner.

Assisting Sasaki Associates were: Shepard/Quraishi, Inc., Architecture, Graphic Design, Trip Tech Models, Inc., and Gary Irish Graphics.

*An Early Morning  
View of Boston Harbor  
(Robin Foster, photographer  
-Earthwatch)*



...every inhabitant who is a  
householder shall have free fishing  
and fowling in any great ponds,  
bays, coves and rivers, so far as the  
sea ebbs and flows...

Ordinance of 1641 of the General Court of Massachusetts  
Bay Colony based upon Charters granted by King  
Charles I to the Royal Governor.

# Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

City of Boston  
Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Robert J. Ryan, *Director*

Board of Directors  
Robert L. Farrell, *Chairman*  
Joseph J. Walsh, *Vice-Chairman*  
James G. Colbert, *Treasurer*  
James K. Flaherty, *Assistant Treasurer*  
James E. Cofield, Jr., *Member*  
Kane Simonian, *Secretary*

Sasaki Associates, Inc.  
Watertown, Massachusetts

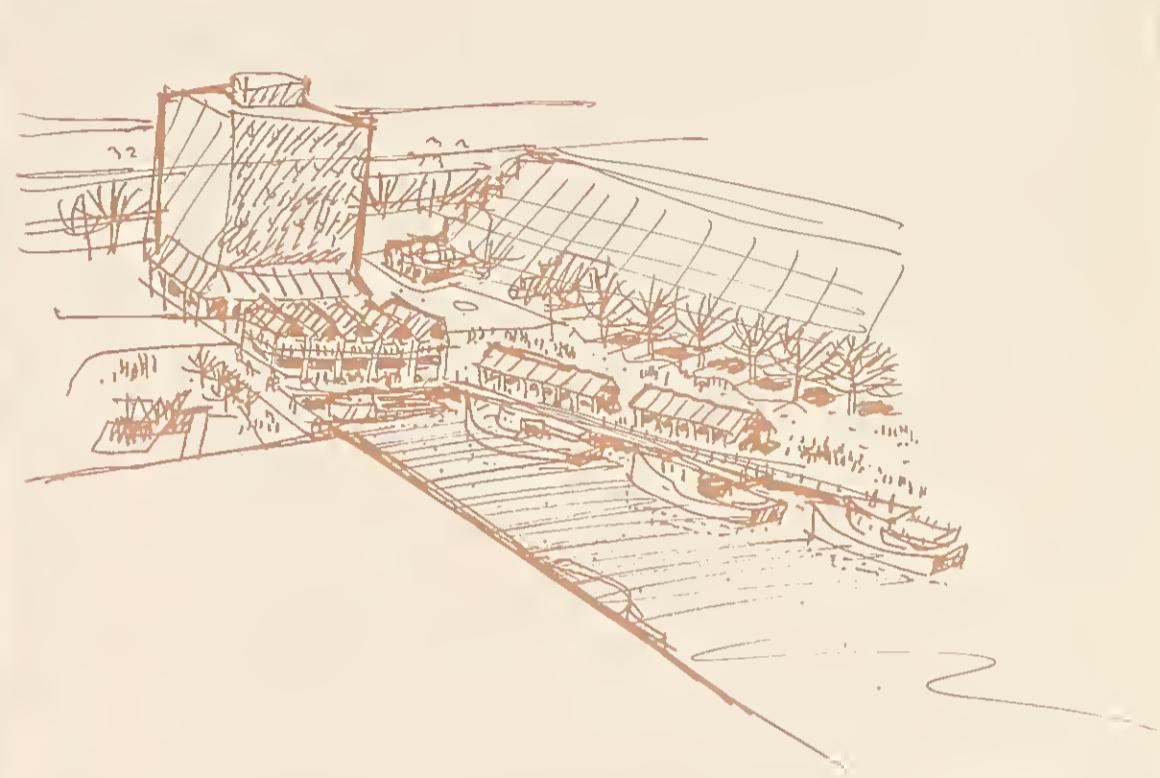


The Boston Redevelopment Authority has initiated this planning study for Boston Harbor. It is only a first step in beginning to articulate the needs, goals, ideas for the harbor and in articulating the various public and private actors who must assume their respective responsibilities in continuing this effort and in achieving the recommendations set forth herein.

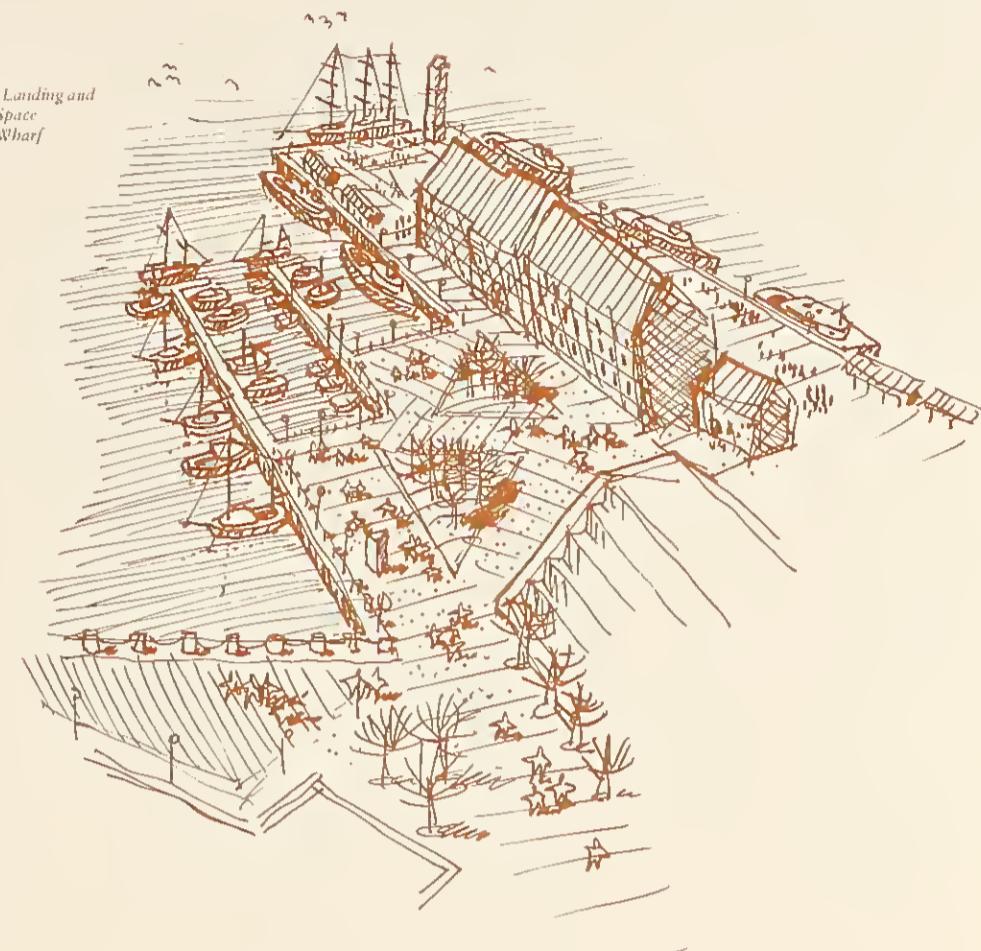
#### Harbor Transportation

Development of two public terminal facilities is recommended: one between Long and Central Wharves adjacent to the Aquarium MBTA station; and one on Fosters Wharf as part of a multi-use complex of public terminal facilities, parking, bus loading and unloading, and restaurant.

Terminal Facility  
between Long and  
Central Wharves



Public Landing and  
Open Space  
Long Wharf



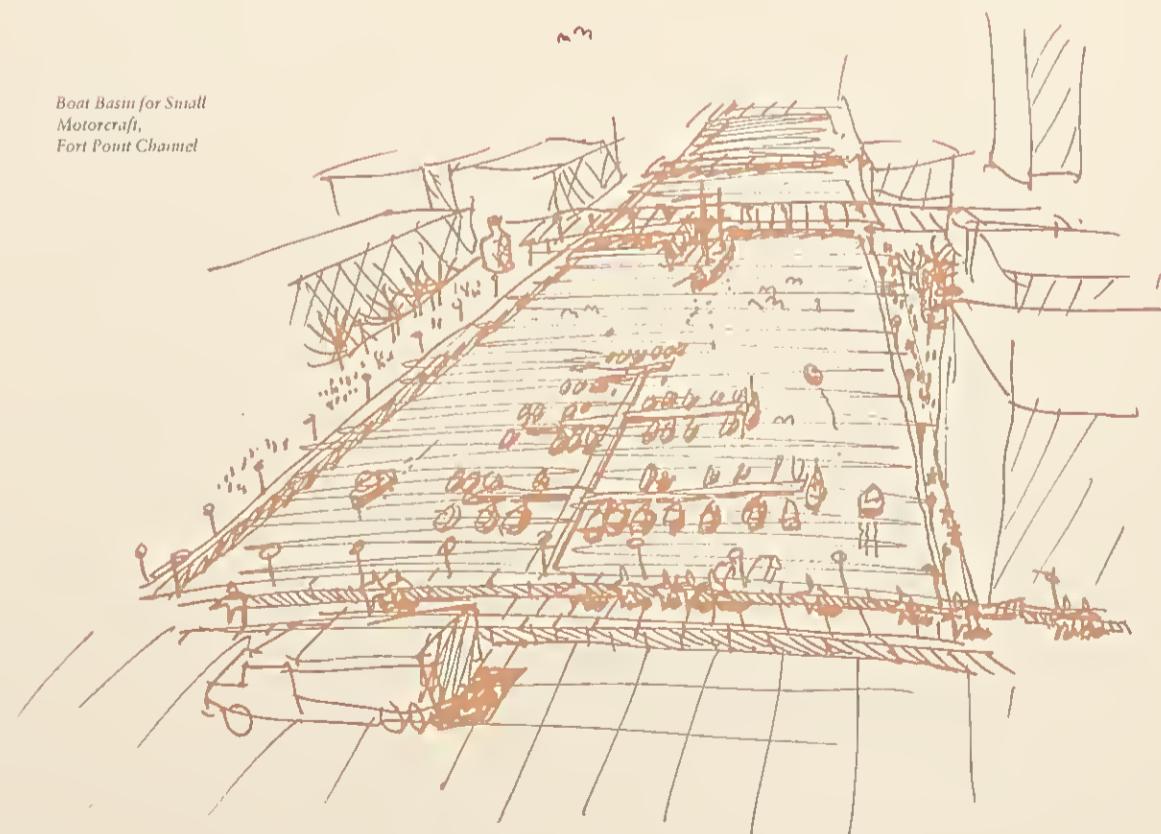
Northern Avenue  
Vest-Pocket Park



Waterfront Pedestrian  
Walkway



Boat Basin for Small  
Motorcraft,  
Fort Point Channel



#### Public Access

A system of public waterfront walkways is proposed along the water's edge from the downtown Waterfront Park to Northern Avenue and along either side of Fort Point Channel. These walkways would be developed by a combination of public entities, private interests, the latter through development controls placed upon new development parcels, or by acquisition of public easements through some existing privately owned parcels.

#### Public Landings

Locations for public landings for small craft are recommended adjacent to Long Wharf, at Northern Avenue, and along Fort Point Channel. The tip of Long Wharf is recommended as the major public landing, but largely for historic boats and ships.

#### Public Open Space

Numerous additions to the downtown waterfront public open space system are proposed including the rehabilitation of the public open areas of Long Wharf, and small waterfront park areas at Rowes Wharf, Russia Wharf, Pier 1 and various locations along the Fort Point Channel.

...every inhabitant who is a  
householder shall have free fishing  
and fowling in any great ponds,  
bays, coves and rivers, so far as the  
sea ebbs and flows...

Ordinance of 1641 of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony based upon Charters granted by King Charles I to the Royal Governor.

## Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

City of Boston  
Kevin H. White, Mayor

Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Robert J. Ryan, Director

Board of Directors  
Robert L. Farrell, Chairman  
Joseph J. Walsh, Vice-Chairman  
James G. Colbert, Treasurer  
James K. Flaherty, Assistant Treasurer  
James E. Cofield, Jr., Member  
Kane Simonian, Secretary

Sasaki Associates, Inc.  
Watertown, Massachusetts





## Boston Harbor

Challenges and Opportunities for the 1980's

